



GRADUATE RESEARCH NEWS

March 2011

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Welcome

March is a very beautiful month of the year as it always brings to the land a sweet and tender mixture of late summer with colourful flowers and early autumn with tender breeze dotted yellow leaves. Yes, this unique time has become a powerful source of inspiration and creativity for poets and many other artists. For the UDRH garden of graduate research, March also provides an added intellectual and social flavour: Our Graduate Research News with so many wonderful stories to share.

Our new candidates and supervisors

The University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) has been further enriched by the arrival of new students. Warmest welcome goes to our new PhD students: **Robyn Collins**, **Rowena MacKean**, **Christine Matera**, and **Daniel Terry**.

Congratulations to **Christine Matera**, and **Daniel Terry** who were awarded Elite Research Scholarship in 2011. The scholarship, worth \$30,000 per year, has been introduced since 2010 to candidates with outstanding academic record and a passion for research.

Research supervisors are the foundation on which graduate research grows. We are very pleased to welcome our newly registered supervisors: A/ Prof **Tony Barnett** and Drs **Martin Harris**, **Susan Johns**, **Jess Woodroffe**, and Mr **Stuart Auckland**. A special welcome goes to Dr **Sonia Allen** from Monash University (VIC), Prof **Neil Piller** from Flinders University (SA) and Dr **Maarten Immink** from the University of South Australia (SA) who have recently joined us as research supervisors. They bring a wealth of research expertise and experience to our UDRH Graduate Research team.



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Good news from our students

I would like to share with you the success stories of our students. Please join me in our congratulations to the following students:

- **Deb Carnes** presented her paper entitled "Method in the Madness: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) research design" at the Emerging Health Policy Research Conference, Menzies Centre for Health Policy, Sydney, 11 August 2010.
- **Sharon Hetherington** did a presentation entitled "Physical Activity and Healthy Ageing: Engaging older adults in Physical Activity" at the 43rd National Conference of the Australian Association of Gerontology, Hobart, 17 - 19 November 2010.
- **Winifred van Der Ploeg** has her journal article entitled "Commentary on Mancuso JM. Assessment and measurement of health literacy: An integrative review of the literature. Nursing and Health Sciences 2009; 11: 77-89" published in issue 11 of the Nursing & Health Sciences Journal.
- **Maria Yue** and **Frances Fan** presented two refereed papers "Coping strategies adopted by international students in an Australian tertiary context" and "The use of MyLO as a courseware in teaching and learning" at the 2010 International Education Research Conference (AARE 2010), Melbourne, 28 Nov - 2 Dec 2010.
- **Maria Yue** has her article entitled "Cultural adaptation of Chinese-background students in an Australian tertiary context" published in volume 17, issue 4 of the international Journal of Learning.

Greetings from new students

Christine Matera

My name is Christine Matera. I would like to say 'hello' to staff and research students in the UDRH and take this opportunity to introduce myself as a new member of the UDRH Graduate Research family.

I am very pleased to receive the University of Tasmania Elite Research Scholarship to undertake PhD in the UDRH under the supervision of Associate Professor Erica Bell and Professor Tony Norton Tasmanian Institute for Agricultural Research.

Over the past fifteen years I have worked extensively with the three spheres of government, business, industry representative bodies and community groups in Tasmania & Western Australia in the areas of natural resource management (NRM), sustainability, climate change and health.

Most recently I have worked extensively with stakeholders including Tasmania Police, Ambulance Tasmania, Public Hospitals, Statewide Mental Health

and Alcohol and Drug Services, and Community Sector Organisations to negotiate and develop a partnership agreement for the delivery of the Places of Safety program. The outcome of which has been the ratification of a Memorandum of Understanding, Operational Protocol and Service Delivery Model for the provision of Places of Safety across Tasmania.



Christine Matera

Prior to this I worked with Local Government in Tasmania and Western Australia collaborating across government, industry and the community to develop strategic responses to NRM, sustainability and climate change issues.

I look forward to my new research journey with the UDRH. Christine

Thuy Thanh Le

I am always puzzled by Carl Jung's concept of synchronicity and the Vietnamese traditional view on human destiny. One day I wandered aimlessly with my husband along the coffee street in Salamanca area in Hobart, I happened to meet Quynh and this beautiful encounter brought us to a coffee shop so that we could talk about life and study in Tasmania. I remember that French artists used to talk about human existence and destiny through cups of coffee along the streets of Paris. So it could be the same with the beautiful Salamanca. Yes this coffee talk turned out to be a wonderful turn in my academic destiny: my research Masters journey at the UDRH.



Thuy Thanh Le

My research is on nail biting (onychophagia), which is a common habit in children and teenagers. The complications manifested from nail biting may be quite serious in the long term, such as bleeding, bacterial infections, yeast infections, oral herpes, and dental problems. These would also include serious complications of hypocalcaemia when it is not diagnosed early enough. The risk is also substantially higher in children who are lactose intolerant.

I was a Monash pharmacy graduate and I have worked as a community pharmacist. I specialise in natural medicine such as vitamins and herbs. Furthermore, my primary goal is to raise more awareness in natural therapy, such as vitamins, and mineral salts to create more understanding in this field and to benefit the community.

I thought Monash was my final academic destination. But somehow my destiny did not stop there as there is another horizon opening its home sweet home for me: The UDRH. I attended the Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium organised by Quynh, Kim and other colleagues in the Faculty of Health Science last October. I was greatly impressed and inspired.

Now I happily call UDRH home. Yes, I feel very much at home here! Thuy

Robyn Collins

My life has been dynamically changing like different colourful seasons of the year. Following an early career as a self-employed dressmaker and fancy dress costume designer, I had a vocational 'makeover' and went into Nursing, initially training as an Enrolled Nurse and eventually advancing to Registered Nurse in 2004.

I commenced a Master of Rural Health in 2006, completing that in 2010. After several years nursing in both the acute and aged care sectors, I've realised that my two passions are in residential aged care, where I continue to practise and Indigenous health, where I am employed as a tutor and assistant lecturer in the Indigenous Health Unit at Monash University, a position which gives me great satisfaction. The very poor state of Indigenous health is a story that really needs to be understood by the wider community.



Robyn Collins

While undertaking my Doctorate, I intend to continue to offer Indigenous Health education to undergraduate health professionals at the Peninsula and Gippsland campuses of Monash and also to maintain my work in the aged care sector, as much as time will allow.

My study will focus specifically on the impact of falls (including those resulting in serious injury and death) on the carers and families of aged residents in residential care facilities in the private, public and community controlled sectors in rural areas. I am particularly interested in how the reflections and perceptions of care offered prior to and following a fall may change policy and practice at a management level.

Undertaking PhD at the UDRH at the University of Tasmania is a beautiful turn in my PhD journey. I look forwards to this new horizon. Robyn

Daniel Terry



Daniel Terry

My name is Daniel Terry and I am pleased to introduce myself as a new member of the University Department of Rural Health. I extend many warm greetings to all staff and research students and look forward to meeting and working with each of you in some capacity over the next three years. I am usually quiet, but very approachable and always willing to assist.

I am the first of a large extended family to have ever had the opportunity to study Masters and PhD, which has been a dream of mine since I was twelve. Therefore, I am very excited to receive the University of Tasmania Elite Research Scholarship to undertake Doctor of Philosophy – Rural Health in the University Department of Rural Health under the supervision of Dr. Quynh Lê and Dr. Jess Woodroffe.

I have always had a passion for health and wellbeing, which

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commenced when I volunteered in South Africa, assisting in many capacities in health and education in both metropolitan and rural settings for two years. This desire led me to become a Registered Nurse when returning to Tasmania. As such I have spent the past seven years working in the community setting, which has allowed me to focus on primary health care, prevention and chronic disease management.

I have never lost the aspiration for understanding and wanting to improve international and global health issues which were often faced on a daily basis in South Africa. This has led me to complete a Masters in International health and has allowed me the opportunity to focus on rural migrant health through the PHCRED apprentice program in 2010. This will marry well with the PhD topic "Health and wellbeing of international medical graduates: Acculturation into the Tasmania rural and remote context".

I look forwards to my new research journey with the UDRH. Daniel

Thesis Life - Dr Martin Harris



Dr Martin Harris

Often it is said that once completed, a PhD thesis gathers dust in a corner or at best provides data for one or two journal publications. Dr Martin Harris has just secured an ALTC Strategic Priority Project Grant (\$209k) that applies his doctoral model to the experience of transition to university by students from non-traditional backgrounds.

Martin's two-year project will investigate and assist rural students, including those from lower socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds, to better manage and cope with their transition to tertiary study in health professional courses – especially where this may involve a physical relocation.

This project will contribute to those activities and initiatives currently taken by universities to assist student transition. The project will prepare transition coordinators make early interventions with students to help them recognise when additional support may be required, how to access and best utilise such support and then to learn from these experiences so that they are better equipped to manage similar challenges in the future.

By detailing these activities and providing guidelines that may be used or adapted for use by universities across a range of different cohorts of students, this project will contribute to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education. Martin's thesis model and data sets continue to grow and thrive.

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The 2011 Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium

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We are pleased to let you know that the Faculty of Health Science Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium this year will be in Hobart on 22 – 23 September, 2011. The Symposium is co-organised by University Department of Rural Health, Rural Clinical School, School of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Human Life Sciences, School of Medicine and the Launceston Clinical School to provide opportunities for research in progress sharing, professional and interpersonal networking, and a chance to reflect individually and collectively on our research journey. It includes a keynote address, public lecture, supervisor training session, thesis writing workshop, and presentations from PhD and research Masters students from the above Schools. There will be a Public Lecture on 21 September prior to the Symposium.

The Symposium is an indication of a dynamic research and collaborative spirit and your participation will definitely enhance the quality of research interaction and social networking.

New book

A new book entitled “**Health and wellbeing: A social and cultural perspective**” edited by Dr Quynh Lê will be published by Nova Science Publishers, New York in early 2011.

This book has the following features:

- It focuses on the social and cultural aspects of health and wellbeing in current societies and cultures. With an increasing interest in population health, particularly in the current context of globalisation, the sphere of health research has been expanded to cover social and cultural factors which not only affect health conditions of individuals and communities but also are determining health factors in some respects.
- It attempts to provide insights on health and wellbeing across cultures, as a great extent of health concepts and practices are culturally constructed.
- It not only provides up-to-date research findings on social and cultural aspects of health and wellbeing, but is also an informative discourse in which meaningful voices are heard and different stories are told.

Most importantly, this book indicates the strong collaborative research spirit of our staff and research students in the UDRH through joint chapters based

on their research projects. The book has 24 chapters and includes authors of different professional and cultural backgrounds within the UDRH and across universities in various parts of the world. This dynamic diversity provides the book with insights from different perspectives, personally, professionally and culturally. The book is on sale at the Nova Science Publisher’s website (www.novapublishers.com) and Amazon (www.amazon.com).

Event calendar

We would specially like to thank all supervisors and guest speakers for conducting workshop series in February and March 2010. Below is the list of graduate research workshops in April – June 2010:

- **Introduction to systematic review**, Wed 23 March, 12 noon – 2pm, videoconferencing, conducted by A/Prof John Field.
- **Ethics in research**, Thu 24 March, Time and date to be advised, conducted by A/Prof. John Field.
- **Supervisor: mentor, meddler or sage** - Supervisors’ Lunchtime Colloquium series, Mon 4 April, 12.30 noon – 2 pm, Launceston, conducted by the Graduate Research Office.
- **How to write a thesis**, Wed 6 April, 12 noon – 2pm, Venue TBA, conducted by Dr Penny Allen.
- **Methods used to elicit & analyse quantitative data**, Wed 20 April, 12 noon – 2pm, videoconferencing, conducted by A/Prof. Dominic Geraghty.
- **Supervising the cross-cultural experience** - Supervisors’ Lunchtime Colloquium series, Wed 18 May, 12.30 noon – 2 pm, Hobart, conducted by the Graduate Research Office.
- **Presentation skills**, Wed 4 May, 12 noon – 2pm, videoconferencing, conducted by A/Prof. Dominic Geraghty.
- **Methods used to elicit & analyse qualitative data**, Wed 18 May, 12 noon – 2pm, videoconferencing, conducted by Prof. Mary FitzGerald
- **Statistics series for health professionals – Part 1**, Wed 1 June, 12 noon – 3pm, videoconferencing, conducted by Dr Tom Hartley
- **Statistics series for health professionals – Part 2**, Wed 15 June, 12 noon – 3pm, videoconferencing, conducted by Dr Tom Hartley

The end of this News reminds us of a line of a Vietnamese Zen poem: “spring comes, flowers bloom, and spring goes, flowers wither” as life is ever continuous. However we feel more energetic and creative when March is flowing by as there are so many leafy trees and energetic plants in our Graduate Research garden which can’t wait to share their creativity and vitality with you.

Yes, we look forward to sharing with you again the other wonderful stories blooming in our UDRH graduate research discourse.

Quynh Lê and Kim Izard

