Welcome

I read somewhere an inspiring statement which is appropriate to start this Newsletter: “To engage people in conversation and network them with others to help them reach their maximum potential to live a deeper and rewarding life experience.” The word “conversation” is the favourable writing style of this Newsletter as it does not only just “give information” as widely used in many organisational communications but also is the forum of the hearts and minds of our graduate research students, who take their research journeys with great passion! Yes, as French philosopher Satre said, we must act out passion before we can feel it. This Newsletter is full of acts of passion. In this spirit, we would like to share with you the second issue of our Rural Health Graduate Research Newsletter.

Our new candidates

Warmest welcome to our new students: Thao Doan, Diana Godwin, Linda Jaffray, Melissa Kirschbaum, Melissa Terry, and Loraine Walker. We would like to welcome new supervisor, Dr Ha Hoang who has recently joined the Rural Health Graduate Research Community.

Congratulations to Linda Jaffray and Melissa Kirschbaum who were awarded the Elite Research Scholarship and Tasmanian Scholarship in 2013. Linda’s research will explore the value of ‘Mindfulness’ as a holistic care approach in the support of people living with a terminal, life-limiting illness and their carers’ in a rural context. Melissa’s research will examine OTC codeine addiction in rural Tasmania. We would like to thank our colleagues and former students for their enthusiastic participation and strong support given to our Induction Program.
Good news from our fellow students

Winter is bringing cold wind and grey sky to Tasmania, but quite a contrast, there is so much sunlight of achievement brightening our graduate research home. We would like to share with you the success stories of our students. Please join me in our congratulations to the following students for their achievements:

• **Deb Carnes**, PhD candidate, presented a paper titled “Charms, challenges and hidden gems: reflecting on the use of QCA for a health care PhD” at the First International Conference on Public Policy in Grenoble, France.

• **Dr John Henshaw** had three articles entitled “Do transdermal opioids reduce healthcare use in an Australian rural pain population? A comparison with oral opioids”, “Do transdermal opioids affect the personal socioeconomic costs of healthcare access in an Australian rural pain population?”, and “The effect of transdermal opioid use on breakthrough opioid and sedative prescribing for rural patients with chronic pain in Northwest Tasmania: A longitudinal study” published in the Journal of Opioid Management and Journal of Pain Resources. These published articles were derived from John’s PhD thesis. Well-done John!

• **Linda Jaffray**, PhD candidate, is presenting the Ian Maddocks guest lecture at the 12th Australian Palliative Care Conference on 3 – 6 September 2013 in Canberra. This is the result of her winning the best abstract for the conference.

• **Alexandra King**, PhD candidate, has been selected to deliver an oral presentation at the 34th National Conference of the Australian Association of Gerontology, “Grey Expectations: Ageing in the 21st Century”, to be held in Sydney, November 2013. The title of her presentation is “Qualitative methods for investigating food security in community-dwelling older adults”.

• **Daniel Terry**, PhD candidate, was awarded a conference grant for graduate research student to attend and present a paper entitled “Recruitment and retention of International Medical Graduates (IMGs): The experience of living and working in rural Tasmania” at the 20th WONCA world conference on Family Medicine – Care for Generation in Prague, Czech Republic, 25 – 19 June 2013. We are very proud to learn that Daniel was invited to chair two sessions at this prestigious conference. For Daniel, “enough is not enough” as he was also invited to conduct SPSS training to staff and students at the School of Nursing and Midwifery in Sydney as part of UTas Group Career Development Scholarship.

• **Dr Maria Yue** had her two articles entitled “International students’ social engagement and social well-being in an Australian regional area” and “Coping strategies adopted by international students in an Australian tertiary context” published in The International Journal of Health, Wellness, and Society and The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Educational Studies respectively.

A new horizon for Lorraine Walker

Lorraine grew up in a tiny hamlet in Gippsland, Victoria and although she has lived and worked in a variety of places in Victoria and overseas maintains a passion for the rural setting. She has a background in a broad context of nursing including: critical care, emergency, and management in Australia and the United Kingdom. Lorraine also worked as an academic in Nursing for many years and has wide-ranging experience in the development and delivery of educational programs. For the last three years Lorraine has been leading activities and related projects to facilitate capacity and quality for professional entry clinical placements in Gippsland.

Her current research is on exploring education and interprofessional learning in rural clinical learning environments. As a health clinician, opportunities for interprofessional learning and practice have always been of interest. Facilitating clinical placements as part of her current and previous academic role and undertaking related projects has engendered an interest in the clinical learning environment, so it seemed like a natural fit to explore these two areas. This study will explore how interprofessional learning opportunities could be formalised, optimised, and supported within the rural clinical learning environment to promote students’ preparedness for interprofessional practice.

The sound of music and the source of inspiration – Melissa Kirschbaum

Melissa grew up in the small town of Ingham, North Queensland. She completed her music degree in Townsville and began to teach piano privately, through the private school system and at university. After the completion of her pharmacy degree she moved to Brisbane where she worked as both a community and hospital pharmacist. Melissa and her husband Mark, also a pharmacist, moved...
Melissa Terry – Legendary and positive reality

In 1997 the Utah State University Marching Band, of which I was a part of, had the honour of playing in the St Patricks Day Parade in Dublin, Ireland. The band spent 10 days touring and performing in various locations in Ireland and England. One of the stops was at Blarney Castle. This is the home of the legendary Blarney Stone. Legend states that the builder of the Blarney Castle was involved in a lawsuit and appealed to a goddess for her assistance. She instructed him to kiss the first stone he found in the morning on his way to court. He did as was instructed resulting in pleading his case with great eloquence and won. Due to his success he incorporated the stone into the parapet of the castle. This has led to the belief that if one kisses the stone the gift of the gab (or eloquence) will be bestowed upon the kisser. Kissing the stone is not easily achieved, however. It requires the kisser to climb to the castle’s peak, then lean backwards over the parapet’s edge. This typically requires help from another. As a musician who found it difficult to effectively express myself with words, I thought this “gift” might come in handy. As many others have, I made the journey and successfully claimed my prize.

Nearly 17 years later I am again embarking on an honourable journey; to research the effects of music on those with postnatal depression. As a new masters candidate I am faced with the challenge of putting thoughts and information into words in meaningful and insightful ways. These stairs are steep but are required to climb in order to reach my goal. From my interaction with other graduate students, past and present, I know that there will be further obstacles in my path. However, keeping my sights set on the goal gives the ability to overcome the obstacles; remembering to stop every once in a while to look back and observe how far I have come. Leaning backwards over the parapet’s edge is unnerving and fear has stopped many from claiming the reward. This could be compared to the uncertainty and fear that comes with beginning the graduate research journey but can be overcome with the assistance of others such as supervisors, staff and students, and family, whose strengths can help us to overcome our fears and uncertainty in the research process. Their guidance and support is essential to complete the task. It’s great to all be in one place where we can draw from others strengths and experience! Although kissing the Blarney Stone may not actually have given me the gift of the gab, knowing that I have may give me that extra dose of courage to present my findings in the upcoming SEiR Conference, the Graduate Research Symposium in November and other conferences and journals. I look forward with eagerness and apprehension to eventually claiming the great reward at the conclusion of this journey.

Why dentists work in the bush – Diana Godwin

Diana Godwin, a postgraduate researcher at the University Department of Rural Health recently presented the results of a systematic literature review on improving recruitment and retention of the rural dental health workforce at the Primary Health Care Conference in Sydney. She undertook the review as part of her research into why dental practitioners move to, and stay in, rural areas of Australia. She said that people from rural areas were more likely to suffer from poorer oral health and to have poorer access to dental care than their metropolitan counterparts partly due to the unequal geographic distribution of dental health practitioners.

Diana is on a PhD pathway. She has been a dental assistant in private practices around Hobart and at Oral Health Services Tasmania. She completed Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Economics degrees while working in the oral health industry to acquire the necessary skills, such as quantitative methods, economics of human resources and social and political research to undertake research into improving oral health outcomes.

In her presentation she noted that two reviewers independently reviewed English-language studies.
and reviews in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries between 1990 and November 2012. Keywords include: recruitment, retention, rural, strategies and dental practitioners. Databases searched were PubMed, CINAHL, Informit, Web of Science, Scopus and Summon.

There was limited research into the factors influencing the rural work movements of dental practitioners. Only 14 studies focused on recruitment and retention of the rural oral health workforce. So the search was widened to include relevant workforce literature on medicine, nursing and allied health professionals. The vast majority of the available health workforce literature focused on General Practitioners.

A major finding was that what encouraged health practitioners to move to rural areas were not the same factors that encouraged them to stay. Most existing successful recruitment strategies were financial or incorporated some kind of obligation, like visa conditions that restricted location of practice or loan repayment schemes. These types of incentives encouraged many new graduate health professionals to begin their careers in rural areas in order to build their skills. However, this can lead to higher staff turnover, with highly skilled workers being continuously replaced by the lesser skilled ones.

Postcard from Scottsdale – Thao Doan

It has been one year since I started my PhD journey. However, everything that happened in the beginning still seems very fresh in my mind. Until now, I enjoy my study very much as I have learnt many things from this academic world despite some unavoidable pressure. What I would like to share with you this time is the story about my data collection in Scottsdale. Although I only just started two weeks ago, I have plenty of things to share.

In my case, I need to interview 100 community dwelling rural older adults who are aged 65 and over. My research location is Dorset area. That is a big challenge for me. Fortunately, thanks to my dear supervisors’ network, I received support from the Coordinator of Dorset Primary Health, Ms Gretchen Long, in engaging with the community. I started with some social activities such as bush-walking, doing gym and having coffees with local people. In each group, I had the chance to talk about my research to canvass their help. Most of them are really friendly. Luckily, I engaged nine participants before I really started data collection. This friendly community made me decide to stay in Scottsdale for a while to enhance my participant recruitment. My willingness to take time and effort has helped me to earn two more sources of support: Dorset Community House and Daycare Centre. I was quite busy during the last two weeks staying there. I joined a walking group named Heart Foundation every Tuesday. I joined the yoga class every Wednesday. I joined the Daycare centre every week to make friends with seniors over there. I talked about my country, Vietnam, and they love listening to me. Last week, I cooked one of my Vietnamese traditional dishes for those in the Daycare centre. They did enjoy my food a lot and kept asking for the recipe. My data collection turned out as a very memorable experience in my research life. Until now, I always feel my heart warmed when talking with these lovely people. It has been only two weeks but I believe I will still enjoy life here in the next few weeks. I will miss this place so much when I leave.

Daniel Terry – It’s a wonderful world after all!

“Out of the darkness comes the promise of light. Out of the violence in the past come dreams of the future” – Anonymous

Just recently we have moved into our new office in Launceston, and as I have emerged from the dark recesses of the cubicle without a view I once again sit at a desk with a view of the outside world. Metaphorically, I have emerged from the darkness and into the light as I proceed to the final few months of the PhD journey.
Amid a few projects I have participated in and the copious amounts of writing I was able to attend the 20th WONCA World Conference in Prague, Czech Republic from 25 – 29 June 2013.

The conference theme was entitled ‘Care for Generations’ which included many interesting topics including “Rural Care” and “Cross-Cultural Medicine”. The themes were concerned with enhancing rural care and the cross-cultural patient–doctor interface. This was a great opportunity to attend and present my findings as it specifically related to my topic.

The presentation from my research focused on the experiences and challenges encountered by International Medical Graduates (IMGs), who live and work in rural communities. The presentation also focused on the study which identifies the acculturation process of IMGs and strategies which facilitates engagement, acceptance and integration with other health care providers and the community. In addition, within the presentation I discussed the recommendations to improve policy regarding IMGs in rural areas.

Attending the conference enabled me to meet with academics such as Dr Margaret Chan, the Director-General of WHO and Dr Amanda Howe, the Chair of the WONCA Working Party for Women in Family Medicine. It was wonderful to interact with them and hear about them. Their topics of discussion at the conference included family doctors in an era of inequality and the health and wellbeing of doctors. Meeting with these and other leaders in the research field provided an opportunity for me to exchange ideas, share research findings and acquire further insight into rural care and cross-cultural medicine.

I came away both enriched and energised by the culture of the conference, the enchantments of historical Europe and pleased to participate in the fulfillment of the Český sen of the Velvet revolution – With hope, I may experience it all again.
tremendously. Perhaps, this aspect of life journey is more challenging to me than the PhD journey as there are no supervisors to help me through. I have to learn it myself and really look forward as each day arrives.

Please keep in touch - Maria.

Other news

With mixed feelings of sadness, happiness and pride, We would like to warmly share with you the news that Kim Izard has left us for a new finance role with Domain Hub.

It is a great loss for us at the UDRH as Kim has been so helpful and productive in every aspect, interpersonally and professionally. However, she deserves our warmest congratulations for being successful with the new appointment. It clearly shows that her excellent abilities and skills have been recognised not only by us but also by other services at UTas. We would like to wish Kim well in her new position and I am sure that despite Kim leaving us, our warm friendship with Kim is still here to stay.

We are also fortunate to have Dr Chona Hannah to join us in the UDRH, taking on some tasks to replace Kim. Chona gained her PhD two years ago in rural health with us at UTas. Thus she has good experience and skills to help us in dealing with Graduate Research. Apart from all these, Chona has a very pleasant personality.

Rural Health Symposium – 21st November 2013

Conducting research can be a lonely journey. Yes, it is important that there must be a time to study and a time to share. A symposium provides an opportunity for our fellow graduate research student from the University Department of Rural Health and Rural Clinical School to share their research journeys with peers, supervisors and interested others. For an active researcher, “never be too big to ask questions, and never know too much to learn something new.” Apart from enhancing critical-thinking and research skills, it is also a chance to open more windows of social world. Like last events, the symposium night is the night to remember fondly: intercultural fragrance from our students’ initiatives and performance.

For these reasons, you are warmly invited to take part in the Rural Health Graduate Research Symposium which will be held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart on 21st November 2013. This Symposium is also essential for candidates who are required to do an oral presentation for the confirmation of progression of candidature. In this case, their supervisors are required to attend the confirmation presentations as their presences are needed for the confirmation process. Supervisors are encouraged to join the Symposium as your support and feedback are important to the students.

Let’s march to Hobart – Graduate Research SEiR conference

The 2013 GR-SEiR Conference is the one designed primarily for UTas graduate research students. It will be held at the Hunter St, Hobart, Art School campus on Thursday 5 and Friday 6 September.

The conference program includes two highly regarded keynote speakers and researchers, Prof Shelda Debowski (Deputy Vice Chancellor at Notre Dame University) and Dr Graham Mitchell (Chief Scientist of Victoria and Principal at Foursight).

Four UDRH students are ready to report their research in progress at this conference.

• Thao Doan
• Melissa Terry
• Daniel Terry
• Joanne Yoeh

Let’s march to the GR SEiR conference to support our UDRH fellow students who will defend their posters
The arrival of our new book


The book consists of 30 chapters under the following themes:

- Conducting research in challenging discourses;
- Research: paradigms, approach and tools;
- Methodological challenges in research;
- Language and technologies in conducting research;
- Ethical challenges in research; and
- Live experiences of researchers.

The book includes researchers from various academic disciplines and different parts of the world such as Australia, China, Vietnam, United Kingdom, USA, Canada, and Poland. A number of our UDRH graduate research students made their contribution to the book.

“For too long now, too many books about research, particularly social science related research, have been locked into a narrow discourse around the benefits or otherwise of either qualitative or quantitative research methods. While this topic is explored in this text, it is not dominated by this one, rather artificial dichotomy. What is exciting about Conducting Research in a Changing and Challenging World is its diversity and the range of dichotomies that are explored and the range of contexts and issues that are reviewed. There is a strong narrative quality throughout the chapters where the voice of the researchers and their purpose is amplified.” (Professor Ian Hay).

Event calendar in 2013

- Using SPSS for understanding and analysing data – Part 1 (face to face session only), Wednesday 28th August, 12 noon – 3.00pm – Daniel Terry and Dr Quynh Lê, Launceston.
- Using SPSS for understanding and analysing data – Part 2 (face to face session only), Wednesday 18th September, 12 noon - 3.00pm – Daniel Terry and Dr Quynh Lê, Launceston.
- Workshop for supervisors of higher degree by research candidates, Wednesday 4th September, 10am - 4pm – Prof Dom Geraghty, UTas Deputy Dean of Graduate Research and Prof Masud Behnia, University of Sydney, Room G47, Swanson Building (AMC), Newnham Campus, Launceston, RSVP: JudyCrees-Morris, Research Services Manager - Launceston Hub, jcreesmo@utas.edu.au
- Coding your interview data samples (face to face session only), Wednesday 9th October, 10.30 – 3.00pm – Dr Peter Orpin, Launceston/Hobart.
- NVivo 10 workshop (face to face session only) 2days, Wednesday 30th & Thursday 31st October, Sue Bullen, Launceston.
- Rural Health Graduate Research Symposium, Thursday 21st November 2013, Hobart.

I hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter. It is not just a piece of information, but fundamentally, the feelings and thoughts are the personal voice of our friends and colleagues. As this Newsletter mentions a great deal about share, care and passion, particularly in the context our graduate research, we would like to end this Newsletter with the following words of wisdom of Albert Camus:

“Don’t walk behind me; I may not lead.
Don’t walk in front of me; I may not follow.
Just walk beside me and be my friend.”

Quynh Lê and Chona Hannah
Photo gallery

The UDRH students and supervisors at the GR Induction Workshop, Launceston, 12th June 2013

Thao Doan (PhD candidate) at Scottsdale Rural Health Teaching Site collecting research data

Daniel Terry (PhD candidate) at the 20th WONCA World Conference in Prague, Czech Republic, 25 – 29 June 2013

Pioneer - A beautiful place for bushwalking
Photo courtesy of Thao Doan