Welcome

Only one more week spring will be here bringing along beautiful flowers and green leaves freshly coming out of a long winter. This Graduate Research News arrives a bit earlier than spring as there are already flowering academic achievements to be shared. Yes, spring spirit has permeated our Rural Health Graduate Research and it is about time to reflect on our students’ research journeys and celebrate their wonderful contributions to the Rural Health Graduate Research discourse.

Our new students and new registered supervisors

We are pleased to welcome the arrival of new students for their studies with us: Cecilia Chiu and Maria Yue. Warmest welcome to Cecilia and Maria!

Dr Jess Whelan has agreed to register as a new supervisor for the UDRH. Dr Whelan will be available to supervise our students from Feb 2010 onwards. Warmest welcome and gratitude to Jess for bringing her expertise, experience and enthusiasm to our Graduate Research family!

Greetings from Maria Yue

My name is Yun Yue (Maria) from Shanghai, China. I joined the UDRH as a PhD student a few days ago and I think I must write a few words to say hello and to express my thanks to staff and students for their care and assistance given to me in my early days at the UDRH. It was an easy decision for me to choose the UDRH among other universities for my PhD study after having a wonderful discussion with Quynh. I understand that I am the first international graduate research student at the UDRH. It is a ‘first’ in my student life and I welcome it wholeheartedly.

My research topic under the principal supervision of Dr Quynh Lê, is about the health and well-being of international students in Tasmania. I feel excited about this topic and look forward to the research journey ahead.
Good news from GR Students

There have been so many activities and achievements. Please join me in our congratulations to the following students:

- **Susan Johns** (supervised by Professors Sue Kilpatrick and Joan Abbott-Chapman) and **Peter Mulholland** (supervised by Professor Judith Walker and Dr Christine Stirling) have expressed their intention to submit their theses in 2009.

- **Ha Hoang**, supervised by Drs Quynh Lê and Rosa McManamey, has her Preliminary Research Plan accepted.

- **Chona Hannah** and **Ha Hoang** were successful applicants among 28% of all applications from UTAS in Round 1 of the Graduate Research Candidate Conference Support central scheme. Warmest congratulations also go to **Peter Mulholland** (Masters candidate) and **Anna Spinaze** (PhD candidate) for winning the Rural Heath Graduate Research Conference Grants (round 1) to the 10th National Rural Health Conference in Cairns. We look forward to hearing about Chona and Ha, Peter and Anna's research in due course.

- **Dr Rosemary Cane** recently received an award in the clinical report category of the Australian Dental Journal Awards of Excellence. The awards, presented by the Australian Dental Association, recognise outstanding papers published in the journal in the preceding year. It was co-authored with Dr **David Butler** of Oral Health Services Tasmania and Dr **Colin Chivers** of the Launceston General Hospital.

- **Cecilia Chiu** has a paper titled ‘Culturally-Informed Health Metaphors on Health Service Delivery’ accepted for publication in the International Journal of Social Health Information Management – USHIM (Volume 2, Issue 2). Cecilia also has her joint paper on ‘Spatial distribution of Telehealth network and its prospect in the new National Broadband network’ accepted for presentation at the International Conference on Successes and Failures in Telehealth 2009 (SFT-09), in Brisbane, 10 - 12 November 2009.

- **Chona Hannah** presented her two accepted abstracts from her research ‘Behavioural Strategies of Intermarried Filipino Women in Dealing with Health Issues in Rural Tasmania’ and ‘Intermarriage and health issues in a rural context’ at the 4th International Conference on Community Health Nursing Research conference in Adelaide, 16 – 20 Aug 2009.

- **Andrew Harris** was invited to participate in a symposium with indigenous African psychology specialists in South Africa, from 12 – 14 August 2009 to present aspects of his Masters research paper on “‘Climbing the tree from the top’: Developing culturally appropriate counseling for African humanitarian entrants to Tasmania, Australia’.

- **Ha Hoang** shared her research findings ‘Maternity care experiences of ethnic minorities in rural Tasmania: A mixed methods study’, from her Masters thesis at the 4th International Conference on Community Health Nursing Research conference in Adelaide, 16 – 20 Aug 2009.

- **Sharon Hetherington** was interviewed by presenter Libby Gore on ABC Hobart 926 on Monday 18th of May 2009 about the health benefits of Tai Chi to older people, in particular whether Tai Chi could assist in delaying the progression of osteoarthritis. Tai Chi and fall risk factors are not only conducted in Sharon’s Honours study but also PhD research investigating how social support for exercise can encourage older people to take up new activities. Sharon also has her abstract ‘Physical activity and healthy ageing: The effects of residential location’ accepted for poster presentation at the IAGG 2009 World Congress in Paris, France, 5 – 9 July.

- **Susan Johns** presented a paper titled ‘Enhancing early childhood collaborations in small rural communities’ at the WA Childcare and Early Childhood Education Conference in Perth on 3 – 5 April 2009. She also has an abstract titled ‘The ABC of primary health care collaborations in rural Australia’ accepted for the GP & PHC conference in Melbourne on 15-17 July 2009 and her article titled ‘How rural schools support the early years’ published in the International Journal of Child Health and Human Development, vol 2, no 2, 2009.

- **Peter Mulholland** was invited to talk about his research, particularly the multidisciplinary role, at the National University Rural Health Conference which was held in Cairns on 23 – 25 July 2009.

- **Anna Spinaze** presented her paper on ‘The lived experience of working with chronic conditions in rural and remote areas: emerging results around changing roles and identities’, at the 4th International Conference on Community Health Nursing Research conference in Adelaide, 16 – 20 Aug 2009.

Research on the Edge: inaugural Cradle Coast Research Conference

NW Coast postgraduate researchers and postdoctoral fellows working across a range of areas showcased their research at the Inaugural Postgraduate Research Conference which took place at the Cradle Coast Campus in Burnie on 6 August 2009. Over 70 people attended ‘Research on the Edge’ which was designed to celebrate the excellence and innovation happening in research across the North West in health, education, sociology, regional development, agriculture, the
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Research conference in Adelaide, 16 – 20 Aug 2009
Research, Dawn Penny Associate Dean Education and local MLP Sid Sidebottom. It is anticipated that this will become
an annual event at which all postgraduates on the North
West coast can showcase their work.

Ha Hoang: We were so excited to be at the 4th prestigious
International Conference on Community Health Nursing
Research conference in Adelaide, 16 – 20 Aug 2009
with scholars from 35 countries all around the world
participating. Listening to the key note speakers and
 concurrent sessions was very inspiring and beneficial. All
of a sudden, we were surrounded by a lot of professors,
doctors and many bright people around the world and we
felt like we were part of that group! It was such a wonderful
feeling: a beautiful mixture of heaven and earth or dream
and reality. It was such a dream-like experience that we will
never forget. The conference atmosphere was so inspiring
and encouraging that I am now determined to put further
efforts in my study and climb any challenging mountains if
needed to.

The night before our presentation we worked very
hard to prepare for it. Instead of
talking as usual we sat quietly in
our own beds and whispered our
presentations. We practised and
practised ourselves. We started
feeling nervous. We went to bed
at 11pm and got up at 6.30am
to get ready. Chona kept telling
me that she was going to take
‘Panadol’ to calm her nerves
down and I intended to try as
well.

After lunch, Chona started her presentation first. I was

impressed and I guessed everyone would have been.
She was so fluent and confident and it did not show
any nervous as when she prepared for it. Maybe
the medicine worked! She got wonderful feedback
from the professor chairing the session. And... finally
the bell tolled! It was my turn. After the chairman
introduced me, I stood up and did not know what I
was doing after that. A few minutes later, I regained
my confidence and started talking. The more I talked
the better I felt. I recognised that I could make eye
contacts with the audience to see how they reacted to
my presentations. I saw them nod and smile and a few
laughs. It made me feel very good. The chairperson
was so kind to give us very inspiring feedback that
touched our heart.

‘Mission completed’, Chona smiled proudly after our
presentations. We flew back to Launceston in the
same afternoon leaving back our sweet memories of
lovely Adelaide but we have taken home with us the
friendship, the courage and the inspiration that we
got from the Conference. Many thanks to the UTAS
Graduate Research Candidate Conference Support
central scheme and my supervisors for their guidance.

Chona Hannah: It was such a wonderful experience
at the Adelaide conference. Ha and I enjoyed each
others’ company. We make sure that we attended all
the keynote presentations as well as those that are
relevant to our research. Apart from the conference,
when we have spare time, we tried to look around the
city centre.

During our presentation we tried to be calm
as much as possible so we could deliver it
properly and I am proud
to say that we did really
well. In fact Professor
Tracey McDonald who
was the chairperson in
the concurrent session
commented that she
was so proud about our
research and how well
the presentation went.
Right after our presentation
before she asked the audience for questions or
comments, she must say something lovely first about
our presentations which she did not really do to the
others. I felt so proud and touched by her kindness
and care. The best thing was that we had a chance to
talk individually to Tracey after the presentation. She
then gave us her calling card which is useful for our
research networking.

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well.

Another wonderful experience that I had was the
chance to build a good relationship with Ha, which
now I can formally say that we are ‘FRIENDS’. Finding
true friend is hard especially when life constantly
challenges us with so many things to do and much
pressure to bear! I feel so grateful to have Ha in my
graduate research journey.

Rural Health

Rural Health
In nearing completion of my Masters through the UDRH I think I have finally caught a glimpse of that elusive light at the end of the tunnel. This did not come in any ‘eureka’ moment but more in a ‘how great to get a paper accepted’ moment. The time I am talking of is when my paper for the 10th National Rural Health Conference finally made it through the peer review process. Of course learning that I now had to present a paper at this conference had both its ups and downs.

The main down was really in the preparing of my paper. At this stage in writing up my Masters all forms of ‘extra-Masters’ activity has ground to a halt, and trying to eek out the time for additional writing has been a challenge to say the least.

On the up side though, this has helped with most difficult part of this graduate process, that of putting my thoughts down on paper. Submitting a paper for a major rural health conference in a peer review stream has helped me clarify my main points and present what I hope is a more cohesive argument.

There was also a bit of extra icing on the cake. My paper and conference presentation Roles of the rural paramedic – much more than clinical expertise allowed me to apply for and receive the recent funding grant from the Rural Health Graduate Research Program, and I thank all involved in this selection process. I have also recently been invited to present my work at conference for the National Rural Health Students Network in July.

Naturally though, the most rewarding part is that others actually want to hear about what I have been researching, and this is making that ‘light’ clearer by the day.

The light at the end of the tunnel with Peter Mulholland

Bonjour Paris with Sharon Hetherington

Sharon Hetherington from UDRH attended the International Association of Gerontology & Geriatrics World Congress in Paris from the 5th to the 9th of July. Sharon and her supervisor, Dr Peter Orpin, had a poster entitled ‘Physical Activity and Health Ageing: The Effect of Residential Location’ accepted for the conference. The poster outlines preliminary findings from part of Sharon’s PhD study looking at older people and social support for physical activity. Key findings outlined in the poster point to ageing in place in a rural township as being more conducive to greater levels of physical activity when compared with ageing in a residential retirement village.

The Examiner is going to run a story on two of the conference delegates from Launceston, Sharon Hetherington and Marie-Louise Bird. Both have had posters accepted for the IAGG conference and both have had their posters printed onto fabric by Scott Signs of Invermay. The fabric posters mean that packing for conference is very easy, no longer requiring delegates to carry bulky A0 sized tubes.

There was an interview with Sharon and Marie-Louise on the ABC drive program at 5.40 on Thursday 2nd of July.

Graduate Research administrative support

Kim Izard moved to the UDRH receptionist role as Yvette Massey has returned to her former role as Graduate Research Assistant on Tuesday 10 August. Yvette will work on Mon, Tue, Thur and Fri, from 9.30 – 2.00 pm each week.

The Rural Health Graduate Research support contact from 10 August 2009 is: Yvette Massey, Phone: (03) 6324 4048, Email: Yvette.Massey@utas.edu.au

We would like to take this opportunity to wish Kim well with her new position and welcome Yvette back to the Rural Health Graduate Research program.

Event calendar

- Coding your interview data samples, 10.30 – 3.30pm, Thursday 17 September, Launceston, conducted by Dr Peter Orpin.
- Project Management, 11.00 – 2.00pm, Thursday 24 September, conducted by Mr Stuart Auckland. Location is to be advised.
- Conference sharing/reflection, 2.00 – 4.00pm, Wednesday 21 October, presented by research candidates Peter Mulholland and Anna Spinaze.
- NVvio training workshop, late October, conducted by Sue Bullen from QSR International Consultancy.
- The 2nd 2009 Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium: 30 Nov - 1 Dec, 2009, Dechaineux Theatre, School of Art in Hunter Street, Hobart.

I hope this Graduate Research News has brought to you wonderful stories of our students’ achievements which are manifested in various forms and meanings, just like the dynamic combination of the four seasons that nature has brought to the land. Stories have endings but the feeling of inspiration and admiration for our students is endlessly endless. Till the next issue, best wishes and take care.

Quynh and Yvette