



School of Physiotherapy



Newsletter

April 2009 Issue

Hands for Health 2009

In 2007, Tom Kwan; a La Trobe University second year Physiotherapy Student, had an idea which would allow Physiotherapy Students to raise money for charity by donating their hands through massage. With the help of the La Trobe Physiotherapy Students Association (PSA), Tom organized a day of massage on campus in which Physiotherapy Students set up massage tables and volunteered their time to massage other La Trobe students and staff for a return donation. Additionally, students were able to massage family and friends at home leading up to the day.

The effort was an enormous success and all proceeds were donated to Tom's chosen charity - the Henrietta Law Foundation, a trust fund set up by the Alfred Hospital to support the hospital's burns facilities and research in this area.

In light of the February bushfires, on March 11th 2009, La Trobe students once again donated their hands for health, with all the money raised being donated to the Alfred Hospital burns unit. The day by all regards was a complete success; raising over \$800 in the La Trobe Agora with still more donations to come from those students who are massaging at home.

Initially the goal of Hands for Health was simply to give physiotherapy students an opportunity to use their skills to raise money for a health related cause. However, considering its success, the La Trobe PSA now aim to spread

the word of 'Hands for Health' and circulate this idea through other universities.

"We will continue to run Hands for Health as an annual fundraising event and students hope that this simple idea may soon be utilized by other Universities nationwide to raise money for worthy, health related causes."

Melbourne University representatives have already expressed an interest in becoming involved in H4H 2009.

To stay updated on all of the 2009 H4H at La Trobe you can look at our news page online at www.latrobepsa.com

Photo: Students participating in the 2009 Hands for Health



Nintendo Donates Wii Equipment

The School sincerely thanks Nintendo for the donation of Wii consoles, Wii balance boards, and the WiiFit and WiiSports software for teaching and learning at our Bundoora and Bendigo locations. These interactive computer games and activities are designed to improve balance, muscle

strength, posture and coordination and have been found to be a valuable tool in rehabilitation – or Wii habilitation as it is being called. Activities can be performed standing or seated using the wireless remote controller and different levels of ability can be selected.

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Megan's Memo...

A major milestone in the history of Physiotherapy education in Australia has taken place with the introduction of a double degree qualifying program at La Trobe at Bendigo and Bundoora campuses (see p3 for more information). The La Trobe Model of flexible entry and exit points for entry-level qualifying degrees in health professional education is an Australian first.

Several staff from the School of Physiotherapy have taken on the role of a workshop facilitator in the first year Interprofessional Practice A and B subjects. Students in my group are from the physiotherapy, podiatry, prosthetics/orthotics and health information management courses. It has been great to see the students working together exploring aspects of health and disability and in the process developing teamwork and leadership skills.

Discipline mentors and a discipline-specific program ensures that students are also developing an identify in their chosen discipline.

The common first year gives students a chance to explore the roles of all the health professions and at the end of this year students will be able to apply for a transfer to any other health discipline program that takes the common first year. We anticipate there will be strong interest in transfers into physiotherapy and we have kept 10 places free to ensure that the best performing students will have this opportunity.

The physiotherapy program at Bendigo now has physiotherapy students in the first, third and fourth years of their program. Once anatomy facilities are developed the entire 4 years will be offered at Bendigo. La Trobe now offers degrees in



Dr Megan Davidson
Head of School
School of Physiotherapy

Physiotherapy, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Dentistry, Oral Health, Social Work and Pharmacy in Bendigo. This strategy aims to improve health workforce recruitment and retention in regional Victoria.

The School of Physiotherapy recently submitted a major report to the Australian Physiotherapy Council. The report is an application to extend full accreditation of the existing La Trobe Physiotherapy programs to 2012, which will cover the final years of the Bachelor of Physiotherapy programs. An application for provisional accreditation of the new double degree programs is being prepared.

Each year La Trobe welcomes a group of physiotherapy students from the Kobe College of Medical Welfare in Japan for a week-long program of study in Melbourne. In late January this year I travelled to Kobe to visit the college and meet the staff and students. I gave a number of seminars on evidence-based practice and outcomes measurement for staff and students of the college.

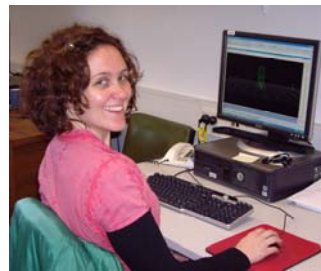
Staff from Kobe will be visiting La Trobe in May, and a student group arriving in September.

Congratulations to "the Doctors"

Congratulations to Stephen Gill and Jodie McClelland (pictured below) who have recently had their PhD theses passed. We look forward to seeing Stephen don the gown and cap in May at our Bendigo campus graduation ceremony and Jodie at the October graduation ceremony in Bundoora.

Jodie's thesis was *Biomechanics of gait and other functional activities in people who have undergone total knee replacement.*

Stephen's thesis was *Exercise-based interventions for people awaiting joint replacement surgery of the hip or knee.*



Bendigo Staff

Lisa Hanson has been appointed as lecturer in the Bendigo program. Lisa will be a workshop facilitator in the first year subjects Interprofessional Practice A and B as well as taking on a Discipline Mentor role for first year physiotherapy students. Lisa also lectures and tutors in cardiorespiratory physiotherapy in the 3rd year of the program.

Lisa Hanson



Visit to Kobe College of Medical Welfare, JAPAN



Sinji Imazaike, Head of Course/PT of Kobe College of Medical Welfare, and Megan Davidson Head of School of Physiotherapy at La Trobe University

Faculty of Health Sciences Research Grant Success

Associate Professor Anne Holland has been successful in receiving \$12,212.00 to support a research project *Tele-Rehabilitation – can pulmonary rehabilitation be delivered via telemedicine technology?* Competition for the grants is strong, with 46% of applications funded in this round. This project will develop and test a prototype for delivering Pulmonary Rehabilitation in patients' homes via a broadband connection. The aim of this pilot study is to establish whether it is safe and feasible to provide exercise-based rehabilitation via the internet to people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), who are often very short of breath on exertion and require close monitoring during exercise. Given the shortage of health professionals, the rise in chronic disease and ageing of the population, Tele-Rehabilitation has enormous potential to improve access to Pulmonary Rehabilitation and reduce healthcare costs. Anne also received a grant from the Windermere Foundation to test this new technology in regional and rural Victoria. Collaborating partners for this study are the Departments of Respiratory Medicine and Physiotherapy at Austin Health and Alfred Health, and the School of Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications at the University of NSW.

Richard Baker awarded NH&MRC Practitioner Fellowship

Richard Baker is Director of the Gait Centre for Clinical Research Excellence at Murdoch Children's Research Institute, and Manager of the Hugh Williamson Gait Analysis Service at the Royal Children's Hospital. He is also an Adjunct Associate Professor with the School of Physiotherapy, the Musculoskeletal Research Centre and the Department of Prosthetics and Orthotics. We congratulate Associate Professor Baker on being awarded this prestigious NH&MRC Fellowship for a period of 5 years. The research questions Assoc Prof Baker is seeking to answer during this time are:

- What are the biomechanical mechanisms limiting walking and gross motor ability in children with cerebral palsy?
- How do a range of clinical interventions affect walking and gross motor abilities of children with cerebral palsy?
- How can gait analysis techniques be improved to ensure sufficient accuracy in routine clinical practice?
- What tools can be developed to support generalist clinical staff in interpreting gait analysis data?



Richard Baker

New program commences at Bundoora and Bendigo

Students entering the physiotherapy program at La Trobe University in 2009 have enrolled in the new double degree Bachelor of Health Sciences and Master of Physiotherapy Practice. Students of many health science disciplines in the Faculty of Health Sciences are undertaking a common first year and studying in inter-professional groups. The new curriculum utilises enquiry-based learning, allowing students to develop strong teamwork and independent learning skills from an early stage in their professional lives.

VTAC figures show that the physiotherapy program at Bundoora continues to be the top-ranking physiotherapy program in Victoria attracting 493 first preferences compared to 185 for the University of Melbourne and 144 for the Monash University programs. The Bundoora program is ranked first at La Trobe University, and 13th (of 974) VTAC courses, compared with 68th the University of Melbourne and 92nd for Monash University.

Entry into the Bundoora program for first round offers through VTAC for VCE leavers was clearly-in at an ENTER of 97.0 or for tertiary transfers with a GPA of 6.25 (out of 7). The Bendigo program had a clearly-in ENTER of 92.65 and tertiary transfers were offered at a GPA of 6.03.

Forty students in the Bendigo physiotherapy program for the first time are commencing their first year at the Bendigo campus. About half of the 44 students who have commenced at Bendigo come from rural/regional Victoria or Tasmania. The primary reason for locating a physiotherapy program in Bendigo is to improve the recruitment and retention of

qualified physiotherapists in rural and regional health services. The majority of graduates from the Bendigo program do take up jobs in rural settings, but many also find work in metropolitan areas.

2008 Physiotherapy Graduate Gets Alumni Award

Congratulations to Sarah Malone (pictured below) who has won the 2008 Alumni Award. The Alumni Award is awarded to the student with the highest weighted average in the final year of their degree. 2008 Awards and Prizes will be presented at a University ceremony on Monday 27th July.



2008 Research Publications

The just-completed annual audit of publications for 2008 reveals that staff and students of the School of Physiotherapy had 48 research articles published in peer-reviewed journals, 3 book chapters, and 7 other publications

New Balance Assessment Equipment

Keith Hill, Hylton Menz and Nick Taylor were successful in applying for an NHMRC Equipment Grant in January. The grant money, together with a contribution from the Faculty of Health Sciences, is being used to purchase a Neurocom Balance Master with Long Plate. This easy to use force platform allows quick functional assessments of balance and mobility tasks, including walking, turning, leaning, and sit to stand.

This machine has been used in a range of projects by Keith in his previous research at the National Ageing Research Institute. It will provide an addi-

tional assessment tool to the well established gait laboratory at the Musculoskeletal Research Centre. It is anticipated the machine will arrive by mid year.

If anyone wants to know more about the Neurocom Balance Master and potential research applications, Keith is presenting at the MRC seminar program on Monday May 18th on "The Neurocom Balance Master - past research from NARI, and potential future research." (HS3 Room 209, 12.00noon), or contact Keith on keith.hill@nh.org.au.



Interprofessional Clinical Education Project News

A seven-month project has been funded by the Department of Human Services Clinical Innovations Strategy. The project builds on a previous partnership project between Northern Health and LaTrobe University. The "Learning Together to Work Together" project developed, implemented and evaluated a model of interprofessional clinical education for

final year allied health students. The program, comprising 8 sessions over 4 weeks, complements the clinical experience students gain whilst on placement. Students work in groups with a team facilitator at the health service to explore the theory and process of teamwork, and share their clinical experiences with the interprofessional team.

The current project will refine and extend this model in two important ways: by increasing the range of organisations involved across a regional area and by extending the model to a wider range of professional groups to include medicine, nursing and students of other health professions and from other universities.

Further information:

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Visiting Scholar

Dr Annet Dallmeijer came to La Trobe University on a working visit from February to April this year. Annet is a movement scientist working as a senior researcher at the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine of the VU University Medical Center in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Her current research interests are physical activity and training, treatment outcome and physical functioning in children with cerebral palsy (CP). Besides that, she has an interest in clinimetrics in rehabilitation and work on mechanics and physiology of wheelchair propulsion.

She is supervising a number of PhD and post doctoral projects, including a strength training study, an evaluation of a physical activity stimulation program in children with CP, and prospective studies on the course of functioning in CP in different age cohorts.



Pain management update for allied health clinicians

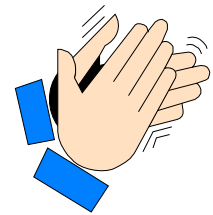
In October 2008, 74 clinicians from over 40 agencies attended an in-service on Pain Management conducted by Lester Jones from the School of Physiotherapy at La Trobe University. The in-service was initiated by Paddy Au Yeung, a Physiotherapist from Eastern Hospital Risk Admission Program (HARP) working with people with a chronic disease.

Karen Loudon, Occupational Therapist and Allied Health Clinical Stream leader at Eastern HARP, says that "Initially Lester was going to speak to the HARP clinicians, but when I mentioned it

to the Sub Acute Care Services and Post Acute Care Services, managers and clinicians, it was agreed that it was a topic that we as an Allied Health Team knew very little about." It was quickly agreed to combine an education session for all the Allied Health clinicians in the Outer East, including clinicians in community health and private practice.

The session was opened by Jonathan Pietsch, the Partnership development manager from Eastern HARP.

Lester presented an update on pain pathways and the cognitive behavioural model of fear of movement. Coffee, tea and nibbles after the session gave the clinicians time to reflect and discuss the topic of pain with Lester.



Electrotherapy update for aged care Physiotherapists

Physiotherapists in Aged Care is a small group of physios in Melbourne that meets every 2 months, and has been established several years. As the name suggests, members are all involved in aged care, most of them working a few hours a week in Residential Aged Care Facilities and one or two work in a private capacity with elderly clients in the community. At the final meeting of 2008 the group was fortunate to obtain the services of Lester Jones, MScMed (PM), lecturer in electrotherapy at the LTU School of Physiotherapy, to attend as the guest-speaker.

Lester was able to provide members with an excellent overview of current thinking and best practice in the use of both TENS and of Ultrasound applications, particularly in the context of evidence-based treatment. Technical details of correct application of both TENS and Ultrasound for optimal effect were discussed, including dosage. There was reference to the many variables which applied to both forms of treatment, eg. with ultrasound,

the output level, frequency selected, duration, continuous or pulsed and so on. Similarly, with TENS there is single-channel or dual-channel application, electrode placement, current strength & pulse-width, pulse frequency and mode selected (continuous, burst or modulated) to consider.

In view of all these variables, trial & error in application of these treatment modalities is impossible to avoid. And it goes without saying that, as with many forms of medical treatment generally, "Quantity-X" ~ the placebo factor, is ever-present. Another matter touched on briefly in the discussion was, with regard to the placebo effect, the difficulty, to a greater or lesser degree, in evaluating the true efficacy of the treatment. In discussion it was felt that it might be easier to establish the relative amounts of placebo-effect vs. actual benefits in the controlled, research situation rather than in the clinical treatment setting. (edited version of group report)

Expressions of Interest: External Advisory Committee

La Trobe University is introducing new entry-level physiotherapy programs at the Bundoora and Bendigo campuses from 2009. The La Trobe model is a double degree qualifying sequence of a Bachelor of Health Sciences and Master of Physiotherapy Practice. A graduate-entry pathway into the Master of Physiotherapy Practice will commence in 2011. Expressions of interest are invited for membership of an external advisory committee. The committee will meet once or twice each year to provide advice to the School on matters relating to selection criteria, curriculum content and learning outcomes in the entry-level programs.

An expression of interest outlining the applicant's qualifications and interest should be emailed to Dr Megan Davidson m.davidson@latrobe.edu.au by c.o.b. Friday 29th May 2009. A curriculum vitae is optional.

Expressions of interest are sought from people with a background in:

- Paediatrics
- aged care
- private practice
- rehabilitation
- acute care
- health services management
- women's health
- rural/regional health
- recent graduate of La Trobe
- physiotherapy consumer

In all but the last category the applicant should be a registered physiotherapist.

For further information please contact the Head of School, Dr Megan Davidson on 9479 5798.



For further information :

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