Towards a new definition of Autism – Changes in the DSM 5 diagnostic criteria

Opinion: By Giacomo Vivanti, Kristelle Hudry, David Trembath, Josephine Barbaro, Amanda Richdale & Cheryl Dissanayake

Autism and related conditions cannot be diagnosed using medical tests. Therefore, diagnosis of these complex disorders still rely on behavioural features defined by classification systems such as the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD, published by the World Health Organization).

The fifth edition of the DSM (DSM 5), scheduled to be published in March 2013, is introducing significant changes to current diagnostic definitions of Autism and related conditions. In particular, with the introduction of the new diagnostic criteria, some of the diagnostic concepts that have crucially influenced clinical practice, research studies, and cultural perceptions of Autism will no longer be used; most notably the concepts of ‘Asperger’s Disorder’, ‘Pervasive Developmental Disorders’ and the ‘triad of symptoms’. Indeed, the proposed

Important Newsletter Changes!

As researchers, listening to others is one of the most important things we do. Right now we are taking a fresh look at our e-newsletter and would like your thoughts on how we can make our news more relevant to you. You can help us by filling out a short questionnaire. There are only eight questions and should take about five minutes to complete. The survey can be found using the following link. Thank you for your time.
Towards a new definition of Autism – Changes in the DSM 5 diagnostic criteria

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criteria for the DSM 5 involve one central diagnosis - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – which will replace the different subtypes defined by the DSM-IV (Autistic Disorder, Asperger’s Disorder, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder and Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified [PDD-NOS]). The ASD diagnosis will be accompanied by the indication of the level of symptom severity. Social and communication problems will be melded into one category, “social/communication deficits” which, together with “fixated interests and repetitive behaviours”, will replace the traditional triad of symptoms (impaired social reciprocity, impaired language/communication, and restricted and repetitive pattern of interests/activities). Unusual sensitivity to sensory stimuli, a clinical feature of Autism that was not listed in the previous criteria, will now be included as a specification of the behaviours that can be coded in the ‘fixated interests and repetitive behaviours’ domain.

The DSM 5 will also introduce a new diagnostic label within the category of Language Impairments; ‘Social Communication Disorder’. This diagnosis appears to be quite similar to that of Autism Spectrum Disorder, as individuals diagnosed with Social Communication Disorder should have an impairment in the “social uses of verbal and nonverbal communication.” The main difference between the two conditions is the presence of repetitive behaviours (which will point to a diagnosis of ASD).

Finally, with the new diagnostic procedures, if the child presents with additional symptoms that are sufficient to meet criteria for other disorders, then s/he will be diagnosed as having two or more disorders (e.g., ASD + ADHD). This was not possible under DSM-IV.

Overall, we believe that the new criteria reflect current understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder better than the current DSM-IV categories. The elimination of DSM-IV subtypes of Autism Spectrum Disorder appears justified by research showing that symptoms and risk factors in Autistic Disorder, Asperger’s Disorder and Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified are more similar than different. The decision is also substantiated by the poor reliability in subtype diagnosis across sites and in

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the extent of variability in the severity and relevance of the symptoms within the diagnostic subtypes. The proposed new category of Autism Spectrum Disorder reflects this combination of homogeneity in the core symptoms and heterogeneity in their severity, giving up on the idea that such heterogeneity can be captured by a discrete number of mutually exclusive categories. This both simplifies the diagnostic process, and potentially increases diagnostic reliability.

As expected with any major change in classification systems, there are also significant risks. It is possible that some that some individuals who currently meet criteria for Autism or related conditions will no longer meet criteria under the new DSM 5. Some of them will probably be classified under the new category of Social Communication Disorder for which there are no treatment guidelines or legislation. Another reason for concern is that the next edition of the ICD might not conform to the DSM 5 criteria, thus jeopardizing international consensus which has supported research advancement over previous decades. These risks will have to be carefully monitored and addressed by both policy makers and the scientific community to ensure that best clinical practice and research are facilitated.
At the Centre

Director’s Report

Each June I find myself aghast that we are already so deep into the new year, and this one is no different! Our lives are so over-rulled by deadlines for grants, tenders, submissions of this and that, that we rarely take time to even celebrate our successes. And we have recently had a few at the OTARC that I want to acknowledge at the outset of my report.

Foremost is the continued support of our Foundation Donor, Mrs Olga Tennison, whose generosity continues to overwhelm those of us who work at the Centre. We are deeply grateful to her. We have also received three philanthropic grants (R.E. Ross Trust; William Buckland Foundation; Phyllis Connor Memorial Trust Inaugural Grant) that, in addition to allowing us to continue operation of the Early Diagnostic Clinic for ASDs, will also allow us to extend the clinic to operating two days per week. I am much relieved that we will be able to continue our important work in diagnosing very young children on the autism spectrum, and that we may now shorten our ever growing waiting list.

Other good news is the continued funding, announced in April, for operation of the Margot Prior Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre, which allows the service to continue to offer evidence-based early intervention as well as high quality long-day care for young children with ASD and their families. In addition, the continued funding allows for continuation of the excellent research being undertaken at the Margot Prior Wing, not only by our academic researchers and fellows, but also by our students. This work, together, promotes early intervention research as well as research on all aspects of early development and learning in ASD.

The bid for a Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Living with ASDs has been resubmitted this month under the leadership of Ms Judy Brewer Fisher (Chair) and Prof. Sylvia Rodger and Dr Rob van Barneveld (Co-Chairs). La Trobe University is one of 7 Universities in this $104.6 million bid which also includes more than 30 end user organisations across Australia. Especially significant is that, this year, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) supported our bid, with the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers, Senator Jan McLucas, announcing that the Australian Government will commit $300,000 for research to underpin the bid to establish the CRC. We are, therefore, very hopeful of success.

I recently attended a Research Workshop on Early Intervention Therapies for Children with Disability, organized by FaHCSIA and held Canberra (June 14), where leading researchers from across the country discussed the necessary steps to build a body of research focused on early intervention for children with disability. It was heartening that a number of leading ASD researchers were in attendance. Our task was to inform the Government about what research is needed to ensure better outcomes for children with disability, their families and carers. This research will then help inform policy development and improvements to early intervention therapies for children with disability. The aim is to build a strong evidence base to underpin the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

It is therefore a time of exciting possibilities which, ultimately, will benefit people with an ASD and their families and those who work with them.
At the Centre

OTARC training on the newly-released ADOS-2
Sept 25th to 28th 2012, La Trobe University, Bundoora VIC 3086
Standard (i.e., clinical) ADOS-2 course over 4 days: $1800
ADOS for Research Course includes above plus Sept 29th (and submission of post-course work to high standard): $2200
Contact k.hudry@latrobe.edu.au for more information/expressions of interest.

More Accolades for Josie!
Dr Josephine Barbaro has been selected by the Australian Academy of Science to participate in the 2012 Theo Murphy High Flyers Think Tank entitled Australia’s population: shaping a vision for our future, to be held in Adelaide on 26-27 July 2012. The Theo Murphy (Australia) Fund will sponsor Josie’s attendance at the Think Tank.

Donations & Grants
To fund our research activities the OTARC relies on the support of private and corporate donors. Our thanks are extended to the individuals and organisations who have made donations to the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre.
Please note that all donations to La Trobe University are tax deductible. If you need more information, please call (03) 9479 2497 or email otarc@latrobe.edu.au.
Donations can be made online or through mail and telephone.
To access these options go to the La Trobe University Online Payments page at http://webpay.latrobe.edu.au/onestop/transform.cgi?TRAN-NO=816
Remember to specify that your donation is for the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC).

Donations
Casconsult Pty Ltd, Consulting engineers, mediators and arbitrators, Clifton Hill
Mrs Olga Tennison
Wendy Kozica, Eddingford Pty Ltd, South Yarra
Mrs Joanne Forrest
An anonymous donor

Grants
Inaugural Recipients of the Phyllis Connor Grant, Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and the EDC Team; Early Diagnostic Clinic for ASDs
R E Ross Trust, Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and the EDC Team; Early Diagnostic Clinic for ASDs

The William Buckland Foundation Grant, Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and the EDC Team for the Early Diagnostic Clinic for ASDs.

LTU ECR Faculty Grant, Dr Josephine Barbaro, The Social Attention and Communication Study-Revised (SACS-R): A pilot study evaluating the efficacy of the SACS-R in identifying infants and toddlers with Autism Spectrum Disorders.


The Apex Foundation – Trust for Autism, Emma Baker Circadian Rhythm Dysfunction in Adults with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder: Evidence from Dim-Light Melatonin Onset...
Getting a little help from their friends

The Tertiary Student with ASD mentoring Study -
Supporting students with ASD in tertiary education

Research has shown that few people with an ASD achieve a post-school qualification. Education is an important component of obtaining future employment and is a key to reducing the costs to communities, families, and individuals.

Until now there has been no research on the needs of people with ASD in tertiary education settings. Research in this area is much needed because preliminary estimates from a study in the USA indicate that the rate of ASD in university students may be as high as 1%.

OTARC was funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) Victoria to undertake research this area. Last year, an assessment was conducted to identify the needs of tertiary students with an ASD. Twenty-one focus groups with ASD students, family members, and tertiary staff were conducted at seven Victorian tertiary institutions: Chisholm TAFE, Holmesglen TAFE, La Trobe University (Bendigo and Bundoora), RMIT TAFE and University, Sunraysia TAFE, University of Melbourne, and Wodonga TAFE. Additional students, parents, and staff also completed online questionnaires.

The findings showed the traits and characteristics associated with ASD hinder many students' learning and ability to cope in tertiary education settings. Although there is legislation for supporting these students, there is no framework for providing uniform and consistent support across all Victorian tertiary institutions. Support strategy that take into account students' ASD characteristics and associated needs, and individual differences, are needed and must be factored into the support programs to assist these students to achieve their potential. Many tertiary staff reported that they do not have adequate knowledge about ASD or strategies for working with these students. Most staff have had no training.

Based on the assessment findings from last year, we developed a number of pilot programs for La Trobe University and Chisholm TAFE to support students with ASD, tertiary staff, and parents. The programs include a: student orientation package, student online mentoring, staff training sessions, and a website for parents, students, and staff. Some of these programs have already been implemented while others are currently being implemented. The effectiveness of the programs are being evaluated and a final report based on these findings will be developed for DHS.

To find out more about the findings from last year or the pilot programs, please contact RuCai (r.cai@latrobe.edu.au, 9479 1868), the senior research assistant working on this project.
At the Centre

Ask a Researcher

The OTARC has a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) link on its website. It can be accessed through the ‘Ask a Researcher’ page. Staff and students answer questions regarding research and other aspects of Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Is there any research/evidence for the use of information communication technologies (ICT) in particular the iPad or other tablet style personal computers for young children in primary school with ASD?

There is no question in my mind that iPads have the potential to support learning, just as desktop computers, laptop computers, and interactive whiteboards have all made their way into schools for the same purpose. However, there is a very real need to ensure that the purpose of introducing them into classrooms is clear, and that any attempts to do so are properly evaluated. iPads have the potential to provide a (relatively) low-cost solution for supporting communication and learning, in some instances. Many children and parents like them because they are portable, desirable, and help children ‘fit in.’ As you know, there are also loads of applications aimed at meeting a variety of needs. The problem is that research simply cannot keep up with the number of applications being developed, or the variety of ways in which iPads being used. To this end, there are still very few studies examining the use of iPads in an attempt to support the learning of children with ASD.

What we do know, however, is that there is a long history of research examining computer-assisted instruction (CAI). From this, we know that some children concentrate better, are more motivated to engage, and at times perform better when taught with the assistance of a computer compared to face-to-face didactic teaching. We also know that some children with complex communication needs benefit from the use of low-tech and high-tech communication aids, designed to support expressive and receptive communication. I think the challenge at this time is to take the lessons learned from previous research in these fields, and attempt to apply the key findings and principles to the new technology in front of us. To illustrate, key lessons we have learned to date include (1) the need to tailor learning supports to meet individual needs; (b) the importance of having a clear goal/purpose and choosing the mode of learning support most appropriate to meeting that specific need; (c) the need to ensure that all key stakeholders (e.g., the student, teacher, parent) agree on the plan for introducing the support and have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to do so; and (d) the need to monitor progress and make changes as needed.

It is difficult to comment on particular situations without having a full understanding of all the issues. However, it would be reasonable to say, based on the research to date, that using iPads in the classroom has both potential benefits (e.g., student engagement and learning) and risks (e.g., distraction, lack of social interaction, cost/breakage). As with all technology used in the classroom, it is therefore a matter of weighing up the benefits and risks on a case-by-case basis. The only caveat is that if a child is using an iPad as a chosen mode of communication, then, like sign language, alphabet boards, or visual supports, it would be very difficult to make a case for why s/he should not have access to their communication supports at all times and in all places.

David Trembath, Ph.D.
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
**At the Centre**

**Tell ‘em all about it!**

**March 27**
Associate Professor Amanda Richdale gave a talk for Irabina parents entitled ‘Sleep Development in Children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder’

**April 4**
Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake, Mental Health Professionals Network Ltd - Webinar, ‘Collaborative care for children with an autism spectrum disorder’

**April 23**
Associate Professor Amanda Richdale spoke at the APS workshop on ‘Treating Behavioural Sleep Problems in Children. ‘What Psychologists need to Know’ with Dr Kate Simpson from The Royal Children’s Hospital

**May 8**
Dr David Trembath spoke at an invited seminar at the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology, Melbourne University about ‘Directions in the Development and Evaluation of Augmentative Communication Supports for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders’.

**May 30**
Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake presented ‘Finding the path to early identification of ASDs’ in the School of Psychological Science Research Colloquia Series

**June 21**
Associate Professor Amanda Richdale and Ms Ru Cai ran a workshop about ‘Tertiary Students with Autism’ for Chisholm TAFE, Frankston.

**June 25**
Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake, 2CC Canberra, Drive program with Mike Welsh

**June 26**
Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake, Morning Program with Stan Thomson, ABC Radio, Mt.Gambier SA

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**Publications**


March 30

April 28

The International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) 2012, Toronto, Canada

Posters:
D. Trembath, T. Iacono, & T. Caithness, The Effectiveness of Speech Generating Devices for Children with ASD.

G. Vivanti, D. Trembath, & C. Dissanayake, Social and Non-Social Abilities Are Differentially Associated to Treatment Gains in Different Domains.

Vivanti, G., Zierhut, C., Dissanayake, C., & the Victorian ASELCC team, Social and Non-Social Abilities Are Differentially Associated to Treatment Gains in Different Domains.

J. Barbaro & C. Dissanayake, Diagnostic Stability of Autism Spectrum Disorders and Predictors of Crossover in Toddlers Prospectively Identified in a Community-Based Setting

R. Joshi & C. Dissanayake, Gender Differences in Autism Spectrum Disorder: Early Markers, Autism Manifestations and Cognitive Development From Birth to Preschool Age


G. Gergis& E. Bavin, ‘Semantic Priming in Children with High-Functioning Autism: An Eye-Tracking Study’


Sleep Special Interest Group
Associate Professor Amanda Richdale co-chaired the Sleep Special Interest Group with Prof Beth Malow from Vanderbilt University. Ms Emma Baker also helped with the organisation of this Special Interest Group (SIG)

Papers:
A. L. Richdale “Lullaby and Good Night or Tomorrow is Gonna Be A Tough Day: Research Predictions for the Influence of Disturbed Sleep and What We Can Do”.


Emma Baker also presented her PhD proposal at the Sleep SIG data blitz.
March

**Dr Sander Begeer** *(pictured above with Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake)*

VU University, Amsterdam (currently a research fellow at the School of Psychology, University of Sydney) attended the OTARC as an Endeavour Research Fellow to undertake collaborative work with Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake and Ms Rebecca McStay. He also presented a seminar at our OTARC Research Seminar Series, ‘Assessment and treatment of empathy in autism’ - Deficient empathic skills are a core diagnostic feature of autism.

April

**Dr Jordy Kaufman**, *(pictured above with Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake)*

Senior Research Fellow, Swinburne BabyLab, Brain & Psychological Sciences Research Centre, Faculty of Life & Social Sciences, Swinburne University of Technology presented at our regular OTARC Team seminar, ‘Brain activity in infant siblings of children with ASD’

June

**Professor Rita Jordan**, *(pictured above)*

Emeritus Professor in Autism Studies: Autism Centre for Education & Research, The School of Education, The University of Birmingham, UK dropped by for a flying visit.

**Dr Sebastian Gaigg** *(pictured above with Dr Kristelle Hudry)* visited from City University, London. He visited the OTARC, EDC and ASELCC, and had collaborative planning meetings with our team, and gave a talk entitled: ‘The Interplay of Emotion and Cognition in Autism Spectrum Disorder’ at the School of Psychological Science colloquia series.
At the Centre

Visitors at the Centre

Our patron, Professor David de Kretser and his wife, Mrs Jan de Kretser visited the OTARC and the ASELCC: Margot Prior Wing. (pictured above with Dr Giacomo Vivanti and Edward Duncan, the Senior Coordinator, Operations at the Margot Prior Wing.)

Actively Fundraising

Please support research at the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre by fundraising through events offered by EVERYDAY HERO. If you enjoy fun runs, triathlons, walks and other activities, this is a fun and easy way to help a good cause. You can find out more by going to the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre’s Everyday Hero Page to see what events are currently being organised. You can form a group or participate as an individual. Current fundraising activities include:


The Age Run Melbourne - Event Date: 15 July, 2012

Encompassing elements of philanthropy, a fun vibrant course and iconic Melbourne landmarks, The Age Run Melbourne 2012 event is one not to be missed. The 2011 event was a resounding success with more than 20,500 participants enjoying the chance to get outdoors, challenge themselves and raise funds for their favourite charity - we hope you’ll choose the Olga Tennison Autism Research centre as you chosen charity.

Everyday Hero has once again partnered with Run Melbourne as the official fundraising partner giving all participants the opportunity to have a fundraising page created for them upon completion of their registration for the event.

Set to take place on Sunday, 15 July, 2012, the event offers people of all ages and abilities to participate. With the option of 5km run/walk, 10km run and half-marathon distances, ‘anyone can’ join in the challenge and enjoy walking or running their way through Melbourne, as they tackle this established, winter warming event.

You can also set up your own charity event (it could be a birthday, a morning tea or anything you can imagine). Thank you for your support.
Assisting parents of children with autism to make intervention decisions by improving their health literacy about evidence

The aim of this project is to assist parents of children with autism to make informed intervention decisions by improving their health literacy about evidence by:

1. Better understanding the information parents are currently using to make decisions.
2. Better understanding their decision-making processes.
3. Evaluating the most commonly accessed information - particularly web-based information in terms of the quality of evidence.
4. Reviewing intervention taxonomies and helping parents to understand what interventions are available and how they are classified.
5. Evaluate the efficacy of a purpose-designed decision-aid for parents of children with ASD using best practice principles in health information literacy, evidence-based practice, client education and ASD interventions.

To achieve the first of these aims, all Autism Advisors in Australia were approached to respond to a survey and to interview parents about sources of treatment information. 12 advisors interviewed a total of 113 parents of children newly diagnosed with autism.

- 83% of parents interviewed reported to be most concerned about the cost of interventions.
- 75% of parents interviewed were concerned about their confidence and ability to decide what interventions were most appropriate for their child and family.
- 81.42% of parents interviewed accessed the Internet to obtain information about autism interventions.

Parent interviews and focus groups were undertaken. A total of 23 parents participated. On average, parents trialled 2.55 interventions (range 2 – 9); of the 99 interventions trialled by the group, 56% of these were behavioural e.g. Applied Behaviour Analysis, Early Intervention and CBT.

The transcripts from these interviews are still being coded and analysed; it appears as though parents prefer information about autism interventions to be in a variety of formats, and relevant to their child and circumstances. Parents often search the internet for information, and claim to be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information that is available. Parents describe a journey from the point of diagnosis, that involves seeking information on autism treatments from a number of sources, and a ‘trial and error’ approach to choosing and trialling autism interventions. Many described the trust they have in health professionals,
At the Centre

Continued from previous page

particularly the therapists that work with their children, to provide them with intervention suggestions.

The results, in addition to the information in the available literature, will be used to inform the development of a resource for parents to assist them to make well-informed decisions about interventions for their child with autism. It is anticipated that this resource will be available in both written and electronic form, and easily accessed via the Internet. This decision-aid resource aims to improve parents’ understanding of evidence and increase confidence with decision-making. A randomized controlled trial (RCT) will be undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the resource.

Any questions regarding this project can be directed to nicole.grant@uqconnect.edu.au

In the Media

April 16

April 23
Education Age ran a similar article and the same research was also posted on the following website: “http://www.healthcanal.com/child-health/27486-How-well-does-your-child-sleep.html”

April
Olga Tennison named ‘Honorary Grandmother’ at Margot Prior Wing.
Whittlesea Leader
Progress Leader
La Trobe University Bulletin Winter Issue (see right)

June
Australian Psychological Society Media Release – ‘Autism shows first signs in under-twos but more funding needed to aid diagnosis’ – released to National media.

ABC One-TV interview by Sonia Faleiro with Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake

2CC Canberra, Drive program with Mike Welsh interviewed Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake

Morning Program, ABC Radio, Mt.Gambier SA, Stan Thomson interviewed Associate Professor Cheryl Dissanayake
DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AND/OR ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER?

Is your child aged 7 to 12 years? Are you and your child interested in participating in a research study? As part of my postgraduate psychology degree, I am investigating social attention abilities in children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder and / or Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you are interested in participating, please contact Claire Forsyth at the La Trobe University Child Development Centre. Telephone: (03) 9479 2151. Email: cl2forsyth@students.latrobe.edu.au

As a thank you for participating, you and your family will go into a draw to win a family movie pass valued at $60.

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS AND LANGUAGE

Ever wondered how language exposure effects development when children have ASD? We are undertaking postgraduate studies in clinical psychology, and need the help of parents and their young child with ASD!

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Bilingual families (English as second language) with a child with ASD aged 2 to 5 years

OR

English only families with a child with ASD aged 2 to 5 years

ABOUT YOUR CHILD

Your child needs to go to an English-speaking playgroup/kindergarten, etc. It does not matter how much language your child has.

WHAT’S INVOLVED?

A 2-3 hour session including standardised language games, behavioural assessments, and free-play for you with your child. We can provide a report on your child’s current skills. For more information or to get involved, please contact:

Nicole Porter & Lisa Rumney: 9479 3271
nlporter@students.latrobe.edu.au
lmrumney@students.latrobe.edu.au
DO YOU WORK WITH INDIVIDUALS/FAMILIES WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS?

We are keen to hear about the experiences of a range of different professionals working with individuals with ASDs and/or their families, particularly regarding the topic of language. Participants would be interviewed for around 30 minutes, at a convenient time and location, or by phone.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Dr Kristelle Hudry
Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre
La Trobe University
k.hudry@latrobe.edu.au
Phone: (03) 9479 5649

WELLBEING AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TODDLERS

Have you ever wondered how having brothers or sisters influences the wellbeing and emotional development of your younger child?

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?
Families who have a 2 year old child (up to 30 months), or a child who will be turning 2 in 2012, who has either:
• An older sibling/s with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (including Autism, Asperger’s, ASD etc) or
• An older sibling/s who is typically developing (i.e., there is no ASD in the family)

WHAT’S INVOLVED?
Two 2-3 hour sessions; one close to when your child is two years old and another one year later. Activities will include standardised behavioural assessments, emotional development tasks and free-play between you and your child. We will ask you to fill in some questionnaires about your child, yourself and your family. For those families who have a child with ASD, we would like to assess their ASD using standardised assessments. We can provide a report on your child’s current skills. Families will also go into a draw to receive one of four $50 Coles/Myer vouchers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Kat Crea
Doctor of Clinical Psychology Candidate
Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre
Ph (03) 9479 3271 (please ask for Kat)
Email: kn2crea@students.latrobe.edu.au
The Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR) will be a member based organization devoted to advancing knowledge about Autism Spectrum Disorders through research and scholarship.

ASfAR membership will be open to individuals engaged in academic and research activities (full members), graduate students and post doctoral researchers (student members) and others (affiliate members) who are involved in the study and service of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). Organizations involved in providing services for people with ASDs may become organisational members.

In order to qualify for membership of ASfAR, fees must be paid annually and an initial membership application must be submitted to the ASfAR Executive Committee. All applications will be reviewed by the EC.

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<th>Membership Category</th>
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<td>Full member ($100 annually)</td>
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Membership fees will support administration of subscriptions, membership etc., a biennial national research meeting (to be held in the alternate years to APAC), an ASfAR website, and production and distribution of a half yearly Newsletter.

For more information email: ASfAR@latrobe.edu.au

In addition to the usual benefits of membership, ASfAR membership will include:
- Reduced registration fee for biennial ASfAR meeting (limited to two registrations for organizational members)
- Receipt of Newsletters/reports
- Ability to vote and run for executive committee positions (only available to full members)
- Online membership directory
- Login website with latest information on autism meetings etc
- Student prizes

Membership Categories:

*Full Membership:
Full Members must have a relevant graduate degree from an accredited university, and have at least 3 recent publications in peer-reviewed journals relevant to autism, or a combination of equivalent alternatives such as a thesis, publications, and/or successful grant(s) for autism related research, to be judged by the Executive Committee. Alternatively, an individual may have other scientific credentials that they wish to submit to the Executive Committee for consideration for full membership.

*Student Membership:
For student Membership, the individual must be enrolled or must have been enrolled within the last three years in an undergraduate or postgraduate program and be undertaking or have been undertaking autism related research at an accredited university. Student Members do not have voting rights.

*Affiliate Membership:
Affiliate Membership status is available for individuals who have some association with autism, but who do not meet the necessary criteria for Full or Student Membership. Affiliate Members do not have voting rights.

*Organizational Membership:
Organizations providing services for people with an ASD may become organizational members. Organizational Members do not have voting rights. Tertiary educational institutes are excluded from becoming Organizational Members.

*International Membership:
International Membership is available to individuals or organizations from countries other than the Asia-Pacific Region and who have some association with Autism. International Members do not have voting rights. Reduced fees apply to emerging economies.
News from the Margot Prior Wing

As we approach our second anniversary here at the Margot Prior Wing we can reflect positively on our journey so far but also look forward to continued development of both the children and the centre. The federal government has recently extended funding for our program for the next three years and we will continue to work hard to contribute to the literature in relation to the use of the ESDM in a group setting.

Over the last 6 months our program has focused on ensuring continued quality improvement and accountability to the ESDM principles within the group setting. This has included implementation of our inclusion program in which our objective is for individual children to be able to learn independently with their peers in a mainstream setting. This program also includes a reverse inclusion component in which we have typically developing children visit our playrooms and we are providing training for staff within the mainstream service on autism spectrum disorders and the ESDM. Parent training has been provided to families to support the use of the ESDM in the group environment.

Our Open Day which was held in March was very well attended by both families on our waitlist and Early Intervention professionals. We will be holding another one later in the year. We will confirm a date soon.

Ed Duncan, Senior Coordinator

News from the Early Diagnostic Clinic

We are pleased to announce that the Early Diagnostic Clinic (EDC) for Autism Spectrum Disorders (EDS) has received further funding to continue its service. In addition to the RE Ross Trust refunding the clinic, two new grants (from the William Buckland Foundation and the Phyllis O’Connor Memorial Trust) will allow more families to have their children assessed and diagnosed in a timely fashion. Importantly, with the release of the Autism Diagnostic and Observation Schedule 2 (ADOS 2), which now incorporates the Toddler Module, we will begin to use this with children as young as 12-months. Currently, over 70% of referred children seen at the EDC meet criteria for an ASD.

Our wait list and bookings have re-opened. Children aged 12-36 months (as at date of assessment), and who have been referred by a primary health care professional, are eligible to be assessed. All enquiries may be directed to our Intake and Assessment Officer at edc@latrobe.edu.au (email preferred) or 0459 163 171. Please contact us if any health professionals require an updated EDC brochure.

Full Membership Criteria has been altered slightly to:

Full Members must have a relevant graduate degree from an accredited university, and have at least 3 recent publications in peer-reviewed journals relevant to autism, or a combination of equivalent alternatives such as a thesis, publications, and/or successful grant(s) for autism related research, to be judged by the Executive Committee. Alternatively, an individual may have other scientific credentials that they wish to submit to the Executive Committee for consideration for full membership.

Nominations to the Executive Committee will soon be called for, which will be followed by an election. Only full members are able to be nominated and to participate in the election of the Executive Committee.

News from The Australasian Society for Autism Research (ASfAR)

The Interim Committee of ASfAR has been meeting regularly, and we are pleased to announce the Inaugural ASfAR Conference to be held at Macquarie University, Sydney, December 6 – 7, with a public event on either the 5th or 8th December (details to follow in a couple of weeks). The Conference too is free for ASfAR members, so do sign up if you are not already a member (email asfar@latrobe.edu.au for an application form).

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Ed Duncan, Senior Coordinator
July 9
**Autism Evaluations: Best Practice Methods and the DSM V**
Presented by special overseas guest: Marilyn J. Monteiro, Ph.D.
One-Day Training - Melbourne workshop
Venue: LaTrobe University, Room 104, Franklin St Campus, Melbourne
Time: 9am–4pm
Price: $295 +GST
https://www.conferenceonline.com/bookingform/index.cfm?page=booking&object=conference&id=16717&categorykey=EA216676-8C26-41F7-935D-2CA54F781A06&clear=1&bookingid=0

July 13-15
**1st Biennial Australian Conference on the Brain and Learning**
Sofitel Brisbane Central in Queensland, Australia.
Developed by Associate Professor Michael Nagel from the University of the Sunshine Coast, in collaboration with Professor Adele Diamond from the University of British Columbia, chair of the original Brain Development and Learning Conference in Vancouver, Building Healthy Minds is sure to provide value and inspiration to those people working in all areas of neuroscience, psychology, education, health and nursing.
Further information can also be found on the website www.brainandlearning.com.au or phone 07 3854 1611 or email georgiat@ozaccom.com.au

July 16
**Autism Evaluations: Best Practice Methods and the DSM V**
Presented by special overseas guest: Marilyn J. Monteiro, Ph.D.
One-Day Training
Venue: ACER, 1/140 Bourke Road Alexandria NSW
Time: 9am–4pm
Price: $295 +GST
https://www.conferenceonline.com/bookingform/index.cfm?page=booking&object=conference&id=16717&categorykey=4780C72F-182C-4AA4-AEBB-F3247F4CA808&clear=1&bookingid=0

July 25
**APPS for Autism Learning Workshops**
Melbourne (Arrow on Swanston)
More information - www.suttonspeech.com.au
Bronwyn Sutton Speech Language Pathologist
bsutton@bmsholdings.com.au

Wednesday 25th July
**Food for Life**
Leonda by the Yarra.
A fundraising event for The Learning for Life Autism Centre
www.learningforlife.com.au
Bookings now open.

July 26-27
**The Autism Association of Western Australia presents Autism Masterclass with Dr Barry Prizant**
Perth, WA
A two-day Masterclass for Educators, Clinicians, Carers and Family Members to enhance support, education and community participation.
Themes -
Supporting people with autism in everyday settings.
Enabling successful inclusion of Students with Autism.
Dealing with difficult behaviour.
For further information and to register for this 2 day Masterclass visit www.autism.org.au. You can also contact us via phone: (08) 9489 8900 or email: seminars@autism.org.au

July 15
**The Age Run Melbourne - Victoria’s premier community fitness event**
Encompassing elements of philanthropy, a fun vibrant course and iconic Melbourne landmarks, the 2012 event is one not to be missed. The 2011 event was a resounding success with more than 20,500 participants enjoying the chance to get outdoors, challenge themselves and raise funds for their favourite charity, and we hope you’ll nominate the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre as your charity.
The event offers people of all ages and abilities to participate. With the option of 5km run/walk, 10km run and half-marathon distances, ‘anyone can’ join in the challenge and enjoy walking or running their way through Melbourne, as they tackle this established, winter warming event.
### Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 27</strong></td>
<td><strong>Annual General Meeting of the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre</strong></td>
<td>More information: See Page 5 or contact Lisbeth Wilks at <a href="mailto:l.wilks@latrobe.edu.au">l.wilks@latrobe.edu.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>July 30</strong></td>
<td><strong>APPS for Autism Learning Workshops</strong></td>
<td>Geelong (Mercure Hotel) More information - <a href="http://www.suttonspeech.com.au">www.suttonspeech.com.au</a> Bronwyn Sutton Speech Language Pathologist <a href="mailto:bsutton@bmsholdings.com.au">bsutton@bmsholdings.com.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>August 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>APPS for Autism Learning Workshops</strong></td>
<td>Ballarat (Oscars Hotel) More information - <a href="http://www.suttonspeech.com.au">www.suttonspeech.com.au</a> Bronwyn Sutton Speech Language Pathologist <a href="mailto:bsutton@bmsholdings.com.au">bsutton@bmsholdings.com.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>August 1-2, 2012</strong></td>
<td><strong>ICare4Autism International Autism Conference</strong></td>
<td>Autism: A Global Perspective at the International Conference Center (ICC) Jerusalem, Israel <a href="http://www.icare4autism.org/events/2012-international-autism-conference/">http://www.icare4autism.org/events/2012-international-autism-conference/</a></td>
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<td><strong>August 8</strong></td>
<td><strong>Talking to Friends and Family about the ASD Diagnosis</strong></td>
<td>Outside the Square Workshops, Level 1, 1368 Toorak Road, Camberwell – enquiries Kirsty Kerr <a href="mailto:info@outsidethesquarepsychology.com.au">info@outsidethesquarepsychology.com.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>August 9-11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Early Childhood Intervention Australia 10th Biennial National Conference &amp; 1st Asia-Pacific Early Intervention Conference</strong></td>
<td>‘Pathways to Participation’ Burswood Entertainment Complex, Perth WA</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>August 9-10</strong></td>
<td><strong>The second biennial Victorian Autism Conference</strong></td>
<td>The Sebel Albert Park, Melbourne. Theme - Knowledge, understanding and awareness across the spectrum If you have any queries, please contact Claudia via email at <a href="mailto:claudia.piscitelli@amaze.org.au">claudia.piscitelli@amaze.org.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>August 9-10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sleep and ASD’</strong></td>
<td>Associate Professor Amanda Richdale will present at this conference.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>August 15</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sleep and ASD’</strong></td>
<td>Associate Professor Amanda Richdale will speak to the Northern ASD Network</td>
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<td><strong>August 20</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sleep in Children and Adolescents’</strong></td>
<td>Associate Professor Amanda Richdale will speak to Wesley College parents</td>
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<td><strong>August 22</strong></td>
<td><strong>Talking to the Child about their Autism Spectrum Diagnosis</strong></td>
<td>Outside the Square Workshops, Level 1, 1368 Toorak Road, Camberwell – enquiries Kirsty Kerr <a href="mailto:info@outsidethesquarepsychology.com.au">info@outsidethesquarepsychology.com.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>September 19</strong></td>
<td><strong>Puberty and Autism Spectrum Disorder</strong></td>
<td>Outside the Square Workshops, Level 1, 1368 Toorak Road, Camberwell – enquiries Kirsty Kerr <a href="mailto:info@outsidethesquarepsychology.com.au">info@outsidethesquarepsychology.com.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>September 21-23</strong></td>
<td><strong>Third Annual Brain Development Conference</strong></td>
<td>Toronto Canada – <a href="http://www.neurodevnet.ca">www.neurodevnet.ca</a></td>
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<td><strong>Sept 25-28th</strong></td>
<td><strong>OTARC training on the newly-released ADOS-2</strong></td>
<td>La Trobe University, Bundoora VIC 3086 Standard (i.e., clinical) ADOS-2 course over 4 days: $1800 ADOS for Research Course includes above plus Sept 29th (and submission of post-course work to high standard): $2200 Contact <a href="mailto:k.hudry@latrobe.edu.au">k.hudry@latrobe.edu.au</a> for more information/expressions of interest.</td>
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<td><strong>October 18</strong></td>
<td><strong>Keeping Safe In the Playground: Bullying &amp; Children with Additional Needs</strong></td>
<td>Outside the Square Workshops, Level 1, 1368 Toorak Road, Camberwell – enquiries Kirsty Kerr <a href="mailto:info@outsidethesquarepsychology.com.au">info@outsidethesquarepsychology.com.au</a></td>
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<td><strong>November 14</strong></td>
<td><strong>Toilet Training for Children with Additional Needs</strong></td>
<td>Outside the Square Workshops, Level 1, 1368 Toorak Road, Camberwell – enquiries Kirsty Kerr <a href="mailto:info@outsidethesquarepsychology.com.au">info@outsidethesquarepsychology.com.au</a></td>
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The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)
ACER is proud to be working with the highly dedicated staff at the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) at LaTrobe University, in organising and facilitating the Workshop and Seminar Series, designed to support both parents and professionals in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

OTARC was established to advance knowledge of the nature and causes of ASDs, as well as to develop and study evidence-based strategies for supporting children and families affected by ASDs. The centre focuses on both basic and applied research.

Both OTARC and ACER wish to support educators and parents in the area of ASD. Please visit the ACER Bookshop for the full range of Autism Spectrum Disorder Resources. (See flyer – PDF – sent with this newsletter.)

Other Researchers seeking participants
You will need to contact the researcher individually, if you are interested in participating in studies outside of the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre.

Monash University – Education

Abilities, Achievement and Autism Spectrum Online questionnaire
Seeking adults on the autism spectrum (with a diagnosis) and people with knowledge of individuals on the autism spectrum (of any age with a diagnosis) who can inform about high abilities and achievements.

Online questionnaire – http://tinyurl/monasheducation
Or contact the researcher: Susan Wade – susan.wade@monash.edu

Phone 61 3 9479 2497
Fax: 61 3 9479 1956
Email: otarc@latrobe.edu.au
www.latrobe.edu.au/otarc

WHERE TO FIND US
The Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre is situated in a purpose-built child-friendly research facility in the School of Psychological Science
Bunorra Campus
La Trobe University