

ILLAWARRA AND SOUTHERN PRACTICE RESEARCH NETWORK (ISPRN) NEWS

CONNECT: UOW

AUTUMN 2013

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ISPRN research grants

ISPRN has secured funding from the Illawarra Shoalhaven Medicare Local (ISML) and Coast City Country General Practice Training (CCCGPT) to support the development of two ISPRN member projects, offering two grants valued at \$5,000 each.

The funding is important for the development of a number of small general practitioner (GP)-driven projects and target GPs who have presented ideas at the ISPRN Research Development Conference and who have worked with ISPRN on initial literature reviews that supported their idea.

Projects chosen at the Research Development Conference will now be encouraged to work on developing their idea into a research protocol which will then be submitted to ISML or CCCGPT for review.

Criteria:

The following criteria must be met in order to qualify for the ISPRN Research Grant funding:

- the research project must be relevant to general practice-based research in Australia
- the CCCGPT grant must involve a GP supervisor or registrar
- the ISML grant must involve some aspect of population health and involve an ISML member
- the research project must be achievable in a 12 to 18 month timeframe
- the research project must adhere to a \$5,000 budget only
- the recipient acknowledges that the research grant money will be administered from a university account and that the funds are used for materials, research assistants and practice incentives.

Need some help to kick start your idea for research grants?

If you have a research topic or idea that you would like to pursue but don't know how, let us know and we can assist you with an initial literature review. Email: isprn-enquiries@uow.edu.au or alternatively, phone ISPRN Coordinator, Bridget Dijkmans-Hadley on (02) 4221 5958.

ISPRN Big Idea Project

In addition to the ISPRN Research Grants, the CCCGPT and ISML have generously offered a further \$5,000 each to help set up our ISPRN Big Idea projects.

If there are any grants or awards that interest you and you require some assistance in addressing the criteria and/or submitting the application, let us know and we can help.

REVIEW: ISPRN Research Development Conference.



Group photo of the ISPRN Research Development Conference attendees 2013. From left to right: Back: Ms Liz Lyons, Mrs Patricia Billington-Knight, Professor Don Iverson, Mr Abhijeet Ghosh, Dr George Puris, Dr Stephen Barnett, Dr Judy Mullan, Dr Carl Mahfouz, Associate Professor David Garne, Miss Bridget Dijkmans-Hadley, Dr Andrew Dalley Front: Dr Vera Stojkowska, Mrs Editt Melgarejo, Mrs Jill Snow, Mrs Alyssa Munkman, Professor Andrew Bonney, Dr Fiona Williams, Dr John Buchner, Dr Min Thauung

Twenty researchers from a range of primary care backgrounds attended the very successful ISPRN Research Development Conference on Saturday 4th of May 2013. Professor Nick Zwar, Professor of General Practice and Head of Undergraduate Teaching, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales, was the key note speaker. He provided insights into his research journey focused on improving the diagnosis and management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in general practice that inspired the group in the development of their research ideas.

Attendees heard about two new projects which were workshopped at the conference in addition to presentations surrounding two ISPRN Big Idea projects. The presentations focused on the development of the Electronic Medical Data group project focused on whether lipid lowering medications make a difference to death rates in the over 75 year old general practice patient? Attendees also heard from Dr Andrew Dalley who presented 'A study on the changing nature of GP Well-being', which will be in development over the next year.

ISPRN would like to thank those who attended on the day. To those who are interested in finding out more about any of the research projects or would like to be involved in ISPRN activities, please let Bridget or Alyssa know. We will continue to keep you informed about ISPRN activities throughout the year. Any questions, contact isprn-enquiries@uow.edu.au.

ISPRN member profile- Dr Fiona Williams

1. What is your training and background?



I completed my medical degree at the University of Edinburgh and completed my general practice training in a rural area of Scotland, similar to the Coast City Country General Practice Training program. I moved to Australia in 2002 and started work as a full-time GP in Thirroul. I now work part-time at the Thirroul practice while also working as Regional Academic Leader for the Illawarra at UOW's Graduate School of Medicine (GSM).

2. How did you hear about ISPRN and what motivated you to join?

I was talking to a fellow colleague about my interest in research and he informed me about ISPRN and suggested it would be a good way to get into research. I thought it would be interesting, so I found the ISPRN webpage and read the ISPRN blog which motivated me to join.

3. How has ISPRN supported you so far?

ISPRN has supported me through the development of my research project which focuses on elderly patients' use and knowledge of benzodiazepines and their attitudes to cessation of this medication. These include- literature reviews, ethics application, templates for consent forms, etc. ISPRN has also supported my developing knowledge of qualitative research by providing articles and PowerPoint's to read through, which has been really useful. I also attended the literature review webinar run by the University of Wollongong librarians which enabled me to be involved in the workshop even though I was at home with children.

4. What was your level of research knowledge prior to ISPRN?

I didn't have a huge amount of research knowledge. I did a few small projects at university similar to what GSM students are doing now. I was also involved in conducting some clinical audits as part of my GP training, but that's about all.

5. What do you hope to achieve, professionally in 2013?

I hope to finish my project! Additionally, I hope to improve my interviewing techniques and learning skills in analysing qualitative data and report writing.

ISPRN research development project updates

Active ISPRN member projects

Dianna Fornasier - Development and validation of an insulin proficiency assessment tool for insulin self management in adults with type 2 diabetes mellitus

The mixed methods study has involved three stages of development and validation of an insulin proficiency assessment tool. Dianna is currently finalising stage three, which entails a pilot of the tool with 40 patients. Three Credentialed Diabetes Educators are assisting her with the pilot, which will be audio-recorded by the investigators, de-identified and transcribed verbatim.

As we go to press, 11 patients have participated in the pilot with 29 patients yet to be confirmed. Following completion of the pilot, the tool will be peer reviewed to check the reliability of the final assessment scores for each patient. The transcripts will also be reviewed by the expert review panel.

Dr Duncan Mackinnon - What is the effect on weight by regularly weighing 20-70 year old attendees in general practice?

Dr Duncan Mackinnon, a GP from Bega, is conducting a study to assess whether the weighing of patients at every consultation (over an eight-month period), followed by usual care, has an impact on healthy weight maintenance of 20-70 year old general practice attendees. The pilot study involves 285 patients from six practices and is well underway, with all practices nearly completing patient recruitment. These patients will now be weighed each time they visit the doctor, with the collected data extracted in November and compared to previous national weight research to determine if the intervention has had an effect on patient's weight maintenance.

Dr Lucie Stanford - Chaperone use in Australian General Practice: current practice attitudes of general practitioners and patients

Dr Lucie Stanford is in the process of analysing data from her study, which involved cross-sectional surveys of patient attitudes to chaperone use, as well as a pilot survey of general practitioners' attitudes, and their current practices, regarding chaperone use for intimate physical examinations. The GP survey has collected data from GPs in Coast City Country General Practice Training and Illawarra Shoalhaven Medicare Local via email and follow-up hard copy surveys. Patient surveys were also distributed and collected from 15 randomly-selected general practices in NSW. A total of 268 GP surveys and 732 patient surveys were received.

Electronic Medical Data (EMD) interest group

The EMD interest group comprised of Dr Adam Hodgkins (lead investigator), Dr Stephen Barnett, Mr Darren Mayne, Dr Jeff Pinkstone, Dr Andrew Bonney, Dr Lucie Stanford and Kathy Godwin has met every six weeks since May 2012. They have been working with Best Practice medical software to create a Structured Query Language (SQL) search to obtain information on patients over 75 and their use of statins. This SQL search is in its final refinement stage. A literature review will commence shortly, followed by an application to the Human

Research Ethics Committee to progress the idea further. The aim is to involve six practices and to analyse their de-identified data on the topic of statin use.

Dr George Albert - Medical students' experience of a longitudinal integrated clerkship – lessons learned

Dr George Albert has been working in collaboration with Professor Nicky Hudson, Professor Andrew Bonney and Patricia Knight on a qualitative project that investigated medical students' experiences of their year-long integrated community clerkship in Phase 3 of the Graduate School of Medicine programme. The research and results relate to the core purpose of the GSM and are of significance to other medical schools.

ISPRN would like to congratulate the team on having their abstract accepted as a poster presentation at the Australian and New Zealand Association for Health Professional Educators (ANZAHPE) Conference, to be held in Melbourne from 24- 27 June, 2013.



New projects

Dr Fiona Williams- The attitude of patients over 65 years to ceasing long-term sleeping tablets (hypnotics)

Dr Fiona Williams was successful in receiving a CCCGPT Small Grant from the Research Development Conference in May 2012. A qualitative methodology will be used to assess elderly patients' use and knowledge of benzodiazepines and their attitudes to cessation. This will provide general practitioners with further insight to deal with a difficult consultation and potentially effect the outcome. The project has been approved by ethics with recruitment about to commence in four general practices.

Dr Meike Flore - Why are GPs asked to remove Implanon contraceptive implants early?

Dr Meike Flore is working with Professor Andrew Bonney and Dr Lily Chen on a qualitative study seeking to understand the reasons why women ask to have their Implanon device removed early. Four practices are yet to be recruited for this study, with practice databases to be used to identify females aged between 18-50 years of age who, in the past five years, have had the Implanon removed for purposes other than the intention to fall pregnant.

ISPRN partner projects

The brave new world of older patients: preparing general practice training for an ageing population.

This joint ISPRN and Centre for Health Care Initiatives (CHI) project aims to develop resources utilising a social marketing framework to improve older patient interactions with general practice registrars (GPRs). Undertaken by Professor Andrew Bonney, Professor Sandra Jones, Lyn Phillipson and Ms Elena Rebbeck, the project will involve construction and target group testing of patient resources.

This study is currently in its evaluation phase with the findings expected to improve older patient interactions with GPRs. This is significant because previous research has demonstrated reluctance by older patients to consult GPRs for chronic problems.

Health literacy project

Conducted by Dr Judy Mullan, Professor Andrew Bonney, Dr Chris Magee, Dr Kath Weston and Bridget Dijkmans-Hadley from the GSM and CHI, this project is part of an international collaboration investigating if there is an association between health literacy and the management of chronic disease in primary care settings.

A pilot phase is assessing the feasibility – in terms of duration, acceptability and level of difficulty - of administering a screening test for health literacy to a patient population diagnosed with chronic disease (i.e. hypertension and/or diabetes).

Nutrition screening

We would like to congratulate Aliza Hamirudin who has had her manuscript about Phase 1 of the nutrition screening project, accepted by the *Australian Family Physician*. It identified barriers and opportunities to implementing nutrition screening of older adults in general practice. Phase 2 of the project - assessing the feasibility of using the Mini Nutritional Assessment-Short Form (MNA-SF) in General Practice settings - has now commenced.



Participants at Junction Street Family Practice watch a video on how to perform MNA-SF

CCCGPT GP registrar resource project: Feasibility study for a randomised controlled trial of shared-continuity for Type 2 Diabetes Management in primary care

This study is investigating ways of involving GP registrars in the care of patients with diabetes, while patients still retain personal care by their regular GP. This style of care is called 'shared-continuity'. The purpose of this study is to determine the feasibility of using shared-continuity for Type 2 Diabetes Management (T2DM) in primary care.

This project has received ethics approval and is being undertaken by Professor Andrew Bonney, Professor Sandra Jones, Professor Don Iverson, Lyn Phillipson, Dr Chris Magee and Bridget Dijkmans-Hadley. Expressions of Interest have been sent to ISPRN practices to assist in the recruitment of 20 patients. Ten participants will participate in shared-continuity and 10 will continue usual care for management of T2DM over an eight month period.

Cross-sectional survey of older patients' views regarding multi-disciplinary care for chronic conditions in general practice- Professor Andrew Bonney, Chris Magee, Dr Russell Pearson

This study involved 511 older patients who were asked to complete a questionnaire on their views of multi-disciplinary care for chronic conditions in general practice.

Professor Andrew Bonney has been holding information sessions to present the results of this study to the 10 ISML practices involved. He also presented at an IHMRI Health Care Delivery theme meeting on the 1st of May 2013 at the Illawarra Shoalhaven Medicare Local's Wollongong office.





ISPRN blog- Public

To ensure ISPRN members can access blog updates and educational modules more easily, the ISPRN blog has become a public site. Past discussions of research ideas have been moved to a password-protected 'members only forum'.

Hosted by the UOW the ISPRN blog enables multiple discussions to be carried out, can archive threads and acts as a bulletin board. It also houses a series of educational resources focusing on how to develop research ideas.

Visit: <http://uowblogs.com/isprn/>.

News and events

Rural Health Outreach Fund (DOHA)

FOR WHO:

- Academic Institution
- Commercial
- Government
- Nonprofit
- Small Business

AIM:

The Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA) is seeking applications for funding to build the capacity of the health sector to deliver improved health outcomes. Funding will be provided to organisations to deliver outreach health services to address health issues identified in regional, rural and remote locations including: maternity and paediatric health, eye health, mental health, and support for chronic disease management.

CLOSE: 25 January 20 14

More details found on the Pivot website, please click here.

Annual practice managers event

ISPRN acknowledges that practice managers are imperative to the running of general practice and believe it is important to keep them informed about ISPRN activities their doctors may be involved in. As such, a networking event is being planned for the second half of the year to provide practice managers with an opportunity to network with other practice managers and ask questions about ISPRN.

For more information please email us: isprn-enquiries@uow.edu.au.

Current practices involved with ISPRN

Region	Number of practices involved in ISPRN
ACT	3
Illawarra	9
Mudgee	1
Murrumbidgee/Riverina	9
Shoalhaven	7
South Coast	1
Southern Highlands	4
Tasmania	1

LEARN MORE

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