

Medical Education Unit Research

School of Medicine, University of Western Sydney

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

MARCH 2009


University of
Western Sydney
Bringing knowledge to life

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Newsletter

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Message from Professor Ian Wilson



From the Chair

Welcome to our second
Research Newsletter.

This year marks a significant
shift in our research program
as we now start
implementing our large-scale
research project.

Buoyed by our success in
2008 we have submitted a
further application to ARC
concerning the development
of professional identity in
health profession students,
and an NHMRC grant
application.

The NHMRC application is
with the University of
Adelaide and explores the
impact of an educational
intervention with General
Practitioners. The focus is on
improving the outcomes for
patients with asthma and
anxiety or depression.

PhD students are a vital part
of the process in developing
a research culture and we
have been lucky to have
David Harding as our - and

the School's - first PhD
student.

David's research has been
progressing well and he is
now in the home stretch and
is aiming to submit in August
this year. His research is
leading to a significant
change in the structure of the
Multiple Mini Interview (MMI)
process in student selection.

In recent weeks I have had
discussions with a number of
people who are considering
taking the step to a PhD. This
will have a significant positive
impact on the culture of the
Unit.

Also increasing the research
culture is the acceptance of a
student to undertake her
Honours degree. She will be
based in the Centre for
Educational Research, be
co-supervised through the
MEU, and conduct the pilot
study on the Big Fish Little
Pond Effect in medical
students.

Welcome

Dr Vicki Langendyk joins us
as a permanent half-time
senior lecturer in medical
education.

As well as extensive
experience in medical
education, Vicki has a
medical degree, Master of
Education, Diploma of
Clinical Epidemiology &

Biostatistics, Diploma of
Paediatrics, and she is
currently engaged in
postgraduate studies in
Philosophy.

Debbie Glover joins us as
an administrative assistant.

She has been in the MEU for
some time on a contract and
we liked her so much we
have asked her to stay.

Debbie's role is primarily with
the educational function of
MEU, but she will be the first
person you meet for anyone
coming to the Unit.

Welcome to both Debbie and
Vicki.

Innovations

The last few months have
seen the development of
CAMERA (Culture And
Medicine Education &
Research Affiliation).

CAMERA came out of
discussion in the unit about
the role of the humanities in
medical education. CAMERA
now has representation from
the wider school.

It is already making itself felt
with a guest speaker and an
Australian Learning and
Teaching Council grant
application (see page 3 for
more details).

Ian Wilson
Director of MEU
Professor of Medical Education

To keep up to date with the latest MEU research news and developments, please email Roslyn to join the mailing list, at r.weaver@uws.edu.au

MEU Research News

- The MEU research project **Medicine in Context** is now underway, with data collection currently taking place. The project, which is led by **Ian Wilson**, Hilary Bambrick, Louella McCarthy, Tim Wills and **Roslyn Weaver**, will evaluate the Year 3 community-based Medicine in Context program.
- **Glenn Mason** has joined the MEU team as the **LAMS** Educational Developer. His work is funded by a research grant administered by Macquarie University on a LAMS online learning project that **Bronwen Dalziel** is investigating.
- **Vicki Langendyk**, **Lorena Hough** and **Roslyn Weaver**, with School of Medicine colleague Louella McCarthy, have formed a new research group within MEU that focuses on medical humanities: the Culture And Medicine Education & Research Affiliation (**CAMERA**). See page 3 for details.

A Pilot Project in Simulation

"The field of Simulation offers experiential learning opportunities and enables the content to be presented in a way that would engage students even more."

Our last newsletter highlighted Dr Janet Chan's recent visit to the Institute for Medical Simulation based at the Center for Medical Simulation, Boston (partners with Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology). Here, Janet discusses some implications of the use of simulation in medical education and research.

This year, the School of Medicine awarded a grant to MEU members Janet Chan and Ian Wilson to investigate the learning of Basic Sciences using Simulation.

In our current program, Year 1 and 2 students are introduced each week to a PBL (Problem-Based Learning) case, which they explore in small groups. Basic Science content relating to the case is covered in lectures and practical

sessions during the week. It can be difficult for students to process and integrate the knowledge covered in different parts of the course. More challenging is to see the relevance of this knowledge to daily practice.

The field of Simulation offers experiential learning opportunities and enables the content to be presented in a way that would engage students even more. Simulation has been adopted and embedded into the curricula of many medical schools around the world.

We propose that by using realistic clinical scenarios constructed around a patient simulator, students will be challenged to consider and integrate knowledge acquired from their Basic Sciences teaching in

order to diagnose the clinical problem.

As students engage and interact with the "patient", basic science concepts can be presented in a realistic manner that may assist in integrating and consolidating their "book knowledge" of a topic, forming a greater understanding of the subject.

At present we are awaiting delivery of our patient simulator and planning a pilot study on Integrating Problem-Based Learning, Lecture and Practical Knowledge using Simulation.

This is an exciting project in Simulation we are about to embark on, and it takes the School of Medicine at UWS forward in its initiatives as a new medical school.

- Janet Chan

Culture And Medicine Education & Research Affiliation (CAMERA)

The Culture And Medicine Education & Research Affiliation (CAMERA) group aims to provide a forum for the intersection of humanities and medicine in research and education, and will pursue research and educational activities that facilitate a cross-disciplinary approach.



Nina Staehle

Visit the CAMERA website to keep up with their activities:
www.uws.edu.au/medicine/som/research/medical_education/camera

Researchers within the MEU and the School of Medicine have recently formed a new research group around a shared interest in medical humanities and medical education.

The Culture And Medicine Education & Research Affiliation (CAMERA) group aims to provide a forum for the intersection of humanities and medicine in research and education, and will pursue research and educational activities that facilitate a cross-disciplinary approach.

The name of the group was chosen to reflect the diverse interests of group members, and the acronym is intended to highlight the importance of looking at education and research from new perspectives and frames.

The group began with MEU members **Vicki Langendyk**, **Lorena Hough** and **Roslyn Weaver**, and School of Medicine colleague Louella McCarthy, who together bring a range of perspectives and interests in their collective expertise in humanities and medical backgrounds.

Vicki Langendyk is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Medicine and contributes to curriculum development, and is also pursuing postgraduate philosophy studies. Lorena Hough has a professional writing degree and research interests in curriculum development and medical education. Roslyn Weaver has a PhD in literature and a writing and editing background, and experience in educational

research. Louella McCarthy has a PhD in the history of medicine, and works in community engagement and medicine.

In keeping with its aim, CAMERA celebrated its first public research seminar in March (see below for full story) and there will be more seminars and conferences in the future. The members will also meet for a monthly reading group to discuss film, literature, history, art and research in the area.

The CAMERA group looks forward to building its research activities and welcomes anyone interested to contact them for more information or about possible ideas for collaboration or joint initiatives.

CAMERA seminar: Nazi doctors and medical ethics

CAMERA hosted its first public seminar on Monday, March 2, 2009. School of Medicine staff, students, and local community members gathered to hear from visiting scholar Nina Staehle as she shared her research on "British trials of Nazi doctors: medical ethics in a political context".

Ms Staehle, who is associated with the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine at the University of Oxford, discussed the historical and political context for the trials of Nazi doctors who participated in medical crimes against prisoners, children, and people in concentration camps. While one might dismiss such atrocities as limited to a particular time and place, Ms Staehle noted that the issue of medical ethics is still relevant for today's health professionals, particularly given medical involvement in the treatment of prisoners in places such as Guantanamo.

This inaugural CAMERA seminar provided a terrific opportunity to consider some of the historical aspects of medicine, particularly in light of more recent medical ethical dilemmas in the context of war and conflict.

Curriculum and Humanities Integration in Medical Education (CHIME) project

As part of their activities, the CAMERA group is developing a new research project: Curriculum and Humanities Integration in Medical Education (CHIME). This project will study the development, implementation and evaluation of a medical humanities component in the undergraduate medical curriculum. For more information, contact Roslyn Weaver, Vicki Langendyk, Louella McCarthy or Lorena Hough.

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