It has been a productive year this year—we have two new exciting HRC funded projects getting off the ground, and two new staff members Dr Duncan Babbage, Senior Lecturer in Translational Research and Ann Seizer, Research Officer. (see Staff News). Duncan is heading up one of the new research clusters—the ‘Implementation Science Cluster’ focusing on translational research, the other ‘Psychosocial Rehabilitation & Community Participation’ is lead by Kirk Reed, and focuses on improving the health and well-being of disadvantaged and marginalised communities.

- **Grants and funding:** We were awarded two HRC grants this year—a feasibility study lead by Paula Kersten ‘Improving participatory outcomes in TBI: a feasibility study’ which is looking at introducing a peer mentoring programme for people with TBI; and a four year project lead by Kath McPherson ‘Living well with a long term neurological condition’ which will use a participatory design to develop, implement and evaluate a new Toolkit to facilitate two-way knowledge exchange between patients and those involved in their care/support.

- **Outputs:** some of the papers produced by the research clusters this year are listed under recent publications, one of which, Mudge et al has shown us the power of ‘Tweeting’. Within days it had been ‘Tweeted’ to over 2,000 people…. definitely something to think about.

- Kath has been invited to join the Major Trauma National Clinical Network - a joint initiative between ACC and the Ministry of Health. This is a great opportunity to get rehab thinking being considered early.

- **Out with the old:** we are getting a new logo and a new look web site in the new year, and along with that the news letter will change, so this is the last of the old style*. Our Facebook page Living Well - Health & Disability is more active too.

We would like to thank everyone who continues to support our research efforts, and look forward to even more productive collaboration in the year to come!

*so this last edition will remain unashamedly old fashioned in order to emphasise the value of the transition!—Ed
2 FOCUS— ENGAGEMENT, HEALTH AND REHABILITATION CLUSTER UPDATE

With each newsletter we focus on the work of one of the clusters (the two new ones will get a spot next year, but in the meantime contacts etc can be found on the website). This month is an update from the Engagement, health and rehabilitation cluster.

Aims

The Engagement, Health and Rehabilitation Cluster aims to:

1. Explore factors influencing health and engagement in rehabilitation
2. Develop novel approaches to augment rehabilitation outcomes drawing on theory and evidence
3. Facilitate the translation of evidence into real world rehabilitation practice
4. Inform policy and practice

An update from the last year

In accordance with our key aim of developing a more strategic approach to our research programme, we coordinated a half day meeting of cluster members and associates in August 2012. This was a very stimulating meeting and was attended by Kath McPherson, Nicola Kayes, Suzie Mudge, Greta Smith, Caroline Stretton, Richard Siegert, Hinemoa Elder, Felicity Bright and Sandy Rutherford. We discussed the strengths of our (then) current topics and methodologies and we made a decision to apply for an HRC programme grant. Over the last year, a subgroup of us (Kath, Nic, Paula, Richard & Suzie) has been working towards a programme application, which is now planned for 2014.

In the meantime, we are busy working on a number of projects, many of which will directly inform the development of our programme application.

- Goals- RCT (Lead: McPherson)
- TBI experiences qualitative study (Lead: McPherson)
- Stroke experiences qualitative study (Lead: McPherson)
- Engagement in stroke rehabilitation (Leads: Kayes, Bright)
- Cancer rehab qualitative study (Leads: Kayes, Reeve)
- Living Well Toolkit (Leads: McPherson, Mudge)
- Walking for life following stroke (Lead: Stretton)
- Components of effective self-management (Lead: Mudge)
- The role of health professionals in self-management programmes (Lead: Mudge)
- Enhancing collaboration and connection in rehabilitation (Lead: Kayes)

We are extremely pleased to have been awarded funding from the HRC for the Living Well Toolkit Study, led by Professor Kath McPherson and Suzie Mudge. In this project, we will develop, integrate into practice and evaluate a Living Well Toolkit to facilitate two-way knowledge exchange between patients and those involved in their care or support. We plan to involve a range of knowledge users including patients, whānau/family, health and social care professionals, the voluntary sector and funders. We anticipate that this approach will result in service improvement during the time of the project. It is exciting to be involved with a project that aims to embed our own and others’ research findings to improve clinical practice within the Auckland region. This work also links closely with the Implementation Science cluster that has recently formed and led by Duncan Babbage and Kath McPherson.

Suzie Mudge, Nicola Kayes and Kath McPherson
Cluster Leads for the Engagement, Health and Rehabilitation Cluster.

Dr Suzie Mudge  Dr Nicola Kayes  Prof Kath McPherson
3. PROJECTS

RECRUITING……

EnCOR: Enhancing collaboration and connection in neurorehabilitation
Applicants: Nicola Kayes, Alice Theadom, Christine Cummins, Felicity Bright, Paula Kersten, Richard Siegert, Kathryn McPherson
Funding: AUT PBRF funds
Research tells us that the relationship between the client and the rehabilitation practitioner is a key factor in the success of services however we do not know what the key ingredients of this relationship are. We would like to identify the core components of this therapeutic connection from the perspective of those currently involved in neurorehabilitation. We want to interview people who have been receiving rehabilitation services for a neurological condition and have had at least four sessions with the same rehabilitation practitioner within the current episode within the last six months and their family members. We will also be holding focus groups with rehabilitation practitioners working in neuro rehabilitation.
Contact: Christine Cummins

Living well with a long term neurological condition
Applicants: Prof Kathryn McPherson, Dr Matame Hanwood, Dr Nicola Kayes, Assoc Prof Paula Kersten, Prof Mark Weatherall, Dr Suzie Mudge, Dr Janice Chesters, Dr Deborah Payne, Dr Bruce Kent, Dr Laura Wilkinson-Meyers, Dr Debbie Snell, Dr Peter Gow.
Funding: HRC
Long-term neurological conditions result in great personal, whānau/family and societal burdens that evidence tells us can be reduced with good quality care and support. However, outcomes remain poor for many. Our mixed methods study seeks to address this in a multi-phased and participatory designed quality improvement project. We will develop, integrate into practice and evaluate a Living Well Toolkit to facilitate two-way knowledge exchange between patients and those involved in their care/support. We will work with a range of knowledge users including patients, whānau/family, health and social care professionals, the voluntary sector and funders.
Our approach should result in service improvement during the time of the project and develop capacity for participatory research and action in chronic conditions in the future. The Toolkit will embed evidence into practice for assessment and treatment processes, to enhance quality care and well-being for people with long-term conditions in New Zealand and internationally.
Contact: Nicola Kayes, or Suzie Mudge

Improving participatory outcomes in TBI: a feasibility study
Applicants: Ass Professor Paula Kersten, Professor Kath McPherson, Dr Nicola Kayes, Professor Richard Siegert, Dr Hinemoa Elder, Professor Mark Weatherall, Dr Richard Seemann, Dr Allison Foster.
Funding: HRC
Around 30,000 people have a traumatic brain injury (TBI) each year in New Zealand. Enhancing their participation (involvement in life situations) has potentially greater impact on clients’ long-term wellbeing than the limited intensive rehabilitation offered shortly after injury. Providing social support by people who have successfully been through the same situation (peer mentoring) is one strategy that has been used to improve participation in some client groups. This study will explore the feasibility and appropriateness of a peer mentoring intervention in the New Zealand context and if successful this will lead to a further clinical trial. Ultimately, if this intervention is effective this could bring about significant health gains for the individual with TBI, impact positively upon their family/whānau and support innovation and improvement in health service delivery and planning.
Contact: Paula Kersten

ONGOING PROJECTS……

Auckland Regional Community Stroke Study (ARCOS IV), measuring and reducing stroke burden in New Zealand: Part 3 qualitative study
Applicants: Professor Kathryn McPherson (Project Lead), Professor Valery Feigin, Dr. Alice Theadom, Ms Suzanne Barker-Collo, Ms Varsha Parag, Professor Max Abbott, Professor Alan Barber, Professor Ruth Bonita, Dr. Paul Brown, Associate Professor Bruce Avol.
Funding: HRC Research Officer: Sandy Rutherford
Previous studies have provided information about the measurement of Stroke. Our new study (ARCOS: Part 3) also looks at the meaning for people and their family/whanau. We are planning to talk to a large number of people who have been affected by Stroke over a 3 year period. We would like to know:
• How Stroke affects people and how this may change over time
• What is helpful or unhelpful in managing difficulties after Stroke
• How people and their family/whanau have adjusted to living with Stroke
We hope to use these findings to improve the health care and support that people receive after Stroke in the future.

Experiences of recovery and adaption after disabling traumatic brain injury
Applicants: Kathryn McPherson (Principal Investigator); Alice Theadom, William Levaile, Joana Fadyf, Matame Hanwood, Nicola Kayes, Nicola Starkey, Grant Christy, Valery Feigin
Funding: Health Research Council Project Manager: Alexis Channon
This is a longitudinal qualitative study exploring the experiences of recovery and adaption after a traumatic brain injury for both the individual injured and their family/whanau. 50 people who have experienced a TBI and are experiencing persistent difficulties and their whanaufamily are being interviewed for the study. The findings will be used to gain a better understanding of the impact of TBI. The interviews are currently ongoing.

STUDIES IN ANALYSIS PHASE……..

Living well with cancer
Lead Investigators: Julie Reeve, Nicola Kayes, Funding: NZPA

Supporting our children through early assessment
Lead Investigator: Paula Kersten, Funding: Ministry of Health

Interviewing the Interviewers
Lead Investigator: Alice Theadom, Funding: PCRC

Goals and self regulation skills in brain injury rehabilitation: a RCT
Lead Investigator: Kathryn McPherson, Funding: Health Research Council

Exploring engagement in rehabilitation in people with stroke
Lead Investigator: Nicola Kayes, Funding: AUT Contestable Grant

The Breathe Easy Study
Lead Investigator: Kathryn McPherson, Funding: Health Research Council

Experience of brain injury research participation.
Lead Investigator: Kathryn McPherson, Funding: AUT Summer Studentship

Thank you again to all those people who have taken part in these studies or supported our work in so many other ways.

Facebook: Along with pursing a new look website and logo next year, we are using Facebook more actively (and would really welcome news, links, comments and more). Please feel free to post! Living Well - Health & Disability )
4. PUBLICATIONS 2013

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS


5 CONTINUED.... PUBLICATIONS 2013


BOOKS, MEDIA AND BOOK CHAPTERS


Invited Lectures

Bright, F. (2013). Does how we think about therapy matter? Voices and values in speech language therapy. Invited presentation at the New Zealand Speech Language Therapists’ Association Conference. 22 May 2013, Hamilton, NZ.

Bright, F. (2013). Engagement in rehabilitation. Invited presentation to Counties Manukau Health Occupational Therapy Seminar. 26 September, Auckland, NZ.

Bright, F. (2013). Engaging with people with communication difficulties. Invited presentation to Laura Ferguson Rehabilitation. 26 August, Auckland, NZ.


Paula Kersten (2013). Implementation-intentions: a strategy for longer term engagement. Presented research to Faculty members at the University of Bournemouth, UK.


NEW ZEALAND REHABILITATION CONFERENCE—REBUILDING, CONNECTING, LIVING, NELSON, NZ. (2013, MARCH 8-10)

Multiple presentations and posters—see April News Letter


Mid-Year Meeting, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 10 - 13 July.


SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & POSTERS.
AUTEL Award for MS Tool

Congratulations to Paula Kersten, Kirsten van Kessel and Duncan Babbage from the MS Energise team have won the AUT Enterprises Limited Innovation Challenge. They delivered their pitch to a panel of judges for their idea to develop tools for MS sufferers to help them manage key symptoms of multiple sclerosis. Winning the award is a significant step in securing the funds required for this development. The team will also be partnering with world class researchers in the UK, combining their expertise in clinically testing interventions for people with multiple sclerosis. Contact: Paula.Kersten@aut.ac.nz

New Staff

We have been pleased to welcome two new staff members to the team this year—Dr Duncan Babbage and Ann Sezier......

Duncan Babbage, PhD, is as Senior Lecturer in Clinical Rehabilitation who joined the team in July. His unique position is part funded by one of our key clinical partners ABI Rehabilitation, and is dedicated to translational research activity across all NZ brain injury providers. As part of this, Duncan is leading a new PCRC Implementation Science cluster.

Duncan’s background is as a consultant clinical psychologist and academic whose primary focus is neuropsychological rehabilitation, particularly in traumatic brain injury. He was NZ Principal Investigator of a recent four year international clinical trial (US, Canada, NZ) examining treating emotion recognition difficulties after TBI, funded by the US National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. Another key research focus of Duncan’s is the use of mobile computing technology as cognitive prostheses.

Duncan is active in neurorehabilitation research dissemination, including through his role as inaugural Senior Media Editor of Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (you can hear him on their podcast: http://archives-pmr.org/content/podcast_collection) and through his succinct email updates on practice-relevant neurorehabilitation research dispatched from www.synapseproject.org. Many of you will know of the professional development courses Duncan co-teaches with Barry Willer each year (www.levelone.org.nz). Starting from 2013 these courses are also running in Australia.

The PCRC has always been focussed on research that is relevant to people with disabilities, their families, and the services that work with them. With Duncan’s appointment we and our partners are together stepping up further to the challenge of facilitating the translation into routine practice of the insights gained in research conducted both here and beyond our borders. Duncan says: “Exciting times.”

Ann Sezier graduated with a diploma in occupational therapy in 1988, with a diploma in physiotherapy in 1991 in Belgium, and with post grad diploma in Health science/ rehabilitation from here at AUT in 2012. Since starting work with us in September as a Research Officer, Ann has also begun a masters thesis on the treatment of chronic dizziness.

Ann has extensive clinical experience as a physiotherapist in Neuro rehabilitation especially in stroke, MS and TBI rehabilitation. She worked as a physio from ’91 to ‘96 in Leukerbad, Switzerland where she also lectured hydrotherapy in the school of physiotherapy; moved to Scotland where she worked as a physio in the Edinburgh Brain injury service and taught spasticity management on the post graduate Brain injury rehabilitation program until 2002; took a gap year and lived in the USA and took elective papers in the Doctorate Physical Therapy program at the UWA, Washington State; came back to England and lived in London from 2003 to 2006 where she worked as a locum clinical specialist in neuro-rehabilitation in multiple hospitals throughout London; and in 2006-2008 she worked as a clinical specialist in the Reading MS therapy centre, UK.

In 2008 Ann moved to NZ where she worked as a physiotherapist at ABI rehabilitation for three years, and as a clinical educator here at AUT, before joining us at the PCRC in September supporting development of an HRC Programme application and working on the Living Well Toolkit study (see Projects). Ann still works in the Dizziness Clinic part time too.

A thank you to all the team

The whole team at PCRC continue to do an amazing job supporting one another and driving forward our research, each contributing something unique and valuable—thank you for another busy and productive year!