Wishing everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

Rather than sending Christmas cards this year, we are adding to our virtual Oxfam small holding instead (via Oxfam Unwrapped), but we would like to thank everyone for their support over the last year, we couldn’t do any of this without you!

The PCR Team

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1. UPDATE

Since our last news letter in June we have had both positive and challenging times progressing our key projects, and are now looking forward to a quick energising break before launching into the New Year! The New Year will also bring some study opportunities at AUT with papers lead by members of the PCR team: Concepts in Rehabilitation (Semester 1) and Innovative strategies: Engaging in Rehabilitation (Semester 2) [http://www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/study-areas/health-sciences/postgraduate-study/rehabilitation](http://www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/study-areas/health-sciences/postgraduate-study/rehabilitation).

- **Grants & Funding:** Together with our research partners, we have just been awarded a grant in response to an RFP from the Health Research Council for a new study “The Living Well as a Disabled Person Project”. This is an exciting new participatory research project which aims, in partnership with disabled people, to identify key strategies for reducing the incidence and risk of obesity and associated chronic diseases for disabled people. The project will move into full swing in the New Year and will have an associated website reporting progress as we go.

- **Outputs:** The final report for the project commissioned by the National Health Committee “Review of the Interface between Formal and Informal Caring in New Zealand” has been submitted and a summary will be circulated to all contributors on release by the NHC. Along with several new publications accepted by international research journals (see Recent Publications), several of our team have graduated from postgraduate study this year (see Staff News) - well deserved congratulations to all!

- **Visitors:** The second half of this year saw stimulating visits from a number of academics. These included: Prof Alain Leplege, Paris Diderot University in July, Dr Marion Gray, James Cook University Australia, staying for her sabbatical, Dr Duncan Babbage, Director of the Psychology Clinic at Wellington and Senior Lecturer at Massey University, Professor Lynne Turner, visiting Professor and collaborator on a number of projects, visited in early October, and Assoc. Professor Graeme Hawthorne, Principal Research Fellow in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Melbourne who visited in November.

2. FOCUS—GOAL SETTING IN TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY: A RANDOMISED CLINICAL TRIAL

Although the true incidence of traumatic brain injury in New Zealand is unclear, estimates suggest that approximately 2,000 people suffer a moderate or severe traumatic brain injury (TBI) every year¹. Goal setting is a key rehabilitation strategy for people in this situation, however, clinical practice in this area is variable and evidence of effectiveness limited.

Kath McPherson is currently leading a randomised control trial investigating two novel goal setting interventions: Goals and self regulation skills in brain injury rehabilitation: An RCT. The study is now nearing the end of it’s first year and, despite difficulties in recruitment, the study team is looking forward to a full year in 2010. In discussion with those in Hamilton we are extending recruitment there in the New Year, so let us know if this is of interest to you. Feedback from participants so far has been very encouraging, pushing the team to continue pursuing every avenue for recruitment. The study is open to anybody in the Auckland, Wellington or Hamilton regions who has had a moderate or severe head injury in the last 5 years. We have ethical approval to advertise the study to potential participants through relevant groups via flyers, notices, adverts and word of mouth. If you would be interested in helping us contact potential participants who may be interested in the study, please contact Kath McPherson for more information 09 921 9999 ext 7110, email: katmcpherson@aut.ac.nz

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3. RESEARCH PROJECTS 2009

Projects currently recruiting

Goals and self regulation skills in brain injury rehabilitation: an RCT
Funding: Health Research Council

This clinical trial is designed to determine the separate and interactive effects on outcomes for people with TBI of an intervention which uses components of both Identity Oriented Goal Training and Goal Management Training known as the Goals-SR (described more fully in the last edition of our newsletter). The research is being carried out in three locations—Auckland, Wellington, and Hamilton and will involve 120 participants. We are actively recruiting for this study.

The Living Well as a Disabled Person Project
Applicants: Kath McPherson, Nicola Kayes, Suzie Mudge, Grant Schofield, Elaine Rusz, Deborah Payne, Richard Hoskin, Sarah Travaglia, Julienne McNendowney, Brgt Mfim-Veitch
Funding: Health Research Council (RFP)
Project Managers: Nicola Kayes & Suzie Mudge

Despite numerous public health initiatives aimed at preventing obesity and related chronic diseases, many may be inappropriate or inaccessible for disabled people. In partnership with disabled people, the proposed research aims to identify key strategies for reducing the incidence and risk of obesity and associated chronic diseases for disabled people. The revised approaches should be more relevant, targeted and acceptable to disabled people and thus be more efficacious in the prevention of obesity and other related chronic diseases.

Assessing therapeutic relationships in physiotherapy
Applicants: Kathryn McPherson, Nicola Kayes, Jessica Besley
Funding: AUT Contestable summer Studentship

The therapeutic relationship between a physiotherapist and their patient is often discussed as an important part of therapy. However, the measures that exist for investigating therapeutic relationships have had very little testing in the physiotherapy setting. This research aims to test two measures of patient perceptions about the therapeutic relationship to explore a) what patients and their physiotherapists think about the applicability and usability of the questionnaires for physiotherapy; b) whether these measures are reliable; c) whether these measures are valid and d) explore the agreement between patients perceptions and their clinicians regarding treatment progress. People who have had at least four sessions of physiotherapy for the current problem they are getting treatment for will be invited to take part through two local service providers.

Improving pre-pregnancy, maternity and early childcare health interventions and support for women experiencing disability
Applicants: Kath McPherson, Deborah Payne, Ruth DeSouza, Lynne Giddings, Dianne Roy, Cynthia Fanjugar, Matire Harwood
Funding: Health Research Council
Research Officer: Bernadette Guerin

Interviews are now all complete for all phases of the project: Phase 1a involved interviewing 30 mothers with disabilities or sensory impairments in the Auckland area, Phase 1b was made up of focus group and individual interviews with women with disabilities and sensory impairments in other parts of New Zealand, and Phase 2 involved a total of 70 people individually or in focus groups in different caring roles. This included family carers, carer advocates and formal service providers.

ACC Literature Reviews
Applicants: Kath McPherson, Jo Fadyl, Nicola Kayes, Greta Smith
Funding: ACC

Testing a new measure of work-ability
Applicants: Kath McPherson, Jo Fadyl, Lynne Turner-Stokes
Funding: ACC
Research Officer: Jo Fadyl

Presented as part of Joanna Fadyl’s Masters thesis (see Staff News), and accepted for publication.

Stroke survivors’ perspectives of the barriers and facilitators to returning to work: A qualitative study
Applicants: Christine Cummins, Heleen Blijlevens, Kath McPherson
Funding: Health Research Council
Researcher: Christine Cummins

New Zealand validation of the international QOLIBRI (Quality of Life after Traumatic Brain Injury) measure for assessing the quality of life after brain injury
Applicants: Kath McPherson, Graeme Hawthorne, Robb Kydd, Christine Cummins
Funding: Health Research Council

Working in conjunction with Melbourne University, this study aims to contribute Australasian data towards testing a traumatic brain injury specific quality of life instrument, the QOLIBRI (Quality of Life after Traumatic Brain Injury). Specifically it aims to explore the validity, reliability and responsiveness of the QOLIBRI in a New Zealand population. The study also aims to compare the QOLIBRI with other commonly used instruments in TBI outcomes research, to track how quality of life changes over the first 18 months rehabilitation post-TBI, to investigate predictors of good quality of life outcomes, and to report on costs associated with recovery from TBI.

Men with impairment and experiences of fatherhood – a qualitative study
Applicants: Marta Leete, Kath McPherson, Phillip Palston, Kate Diesfeld
Funding: AUT contestable fund / HRC PhD Award
Researcher: Marta Leete

The exploratory pilot phase is nearing completion; with final data analysis being carried out. Preliminary findings have been presented at the 25th Pacific Rim Conference on Disabilities in Hawaii in May 09. This project is the basis of Marta’s PhD study, and is on hold for 12 months while Marta is on maternity leave.

Projects completed in 2009

A Review of the Interface between Formal and Informal Caring in New Zealand
Applicants: Kath McPherson, Nicola Kayes, Natasha Moloczij, Kate Diesfeld, Tineke walker, Christine Cummins
Funding: National Health Committee

This study explored how services connect with carers (family/friends supporting people with health needs or disabilities), and changes that could be made to better address the needs of people in these caring roles. We interviewed a total of 70 people individually or in focus groups in different caring roles. This included family carers, carer advocates and formal service providers. These interviews focused on finding out peoples’ experiences of current services and what suggestions they had for how future services could be improved. The final report has been submitted to NHC, and conclusion is being awaited to circulate findings to participants.

Evaluation of a stroke service designed to increase community integration and participation for the chronic stroke survivor
Applicants: Kath McPherson, Rosie Parr, Sandie Alexander, Natasha Moloczij, Nicola Kayes
Funding: Health Research Council
Researcher: Natasha Moloczij

This study has been completed and the results have been disseminated to stakeholders.

Factors influencing the decision to seek employment or return to work after spinal cord injury: A qualitative pilot study
Applicants: Joanna Fadyl, Kath McPherson, Nicola Kayes, Sridar Atesh, Julian Verkaaik, Aaron Perriam
Funding: Health Research Council
Researcher: Joanna Fadyl

Findings from this research were presented at the Australasian Spinal Cord Society conference in Christchurch in November 2008, and at a
PERSON CENTRED REHABILITATION RESEARCH TEAM (PCR)

3. CONTINUED....... PCR RESEARCH PROJECTS 2009

community meeting at the Auckland Spinal Unit in December 2008. Paper accepted for publication in the Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation. (Currently available online (DOI:10.1007/s10926-009-9204-1))

Facilitating activity for well-being in people with Multiple Sclerosis
Applicants: Kathryn McPherson, Denise Taylor, Harry McNaughton, Nicola Kayes, Philip Schluter, Gregory Kolt
Funding: Health Research Council
Researcher: Nicola Kayes
This study, which was featured in the December 2007 issue of this newsletter, is now complete. The work funded by the Health Research Council (HRC), aimed to explore the barriers and facilitators to physical activity for people with MS and led to the development of a novel evidence-based, theoretically-driven intervention - the Facilitating Activity for Well-Being (FAB) Programme which has since been piloted in a small sample of people with MS.

Other Projects (with PCR co-applicants)

Traumatic brain injury burden in New Zealand: A population-based incidence and outcomes study

Exploring a personalised therapeutic exercise programme for women diagnosed with breast cancer
Applicants: Denise Taylor, Christine Cummins, Greta Riley, Kath McPherson.
Funding: AUT Contestable grant

A pilot study of a structured means of eliciting goals in rehabilitation
Applicants: William Taylor, University of Otago et al. Funding HRC

A personal digital assistant to augment goal management training
Applicants: Symonds J, Kayes NM, McPherson KM, Seet, BSchool of Computing and Mathematical Sciences (AUT). Funding: HRC

The role of allied health professionals in health promotion
Needle, Petchey, Scriven, Delvin, McPherson. Funding: NHS-SDO

Evidence based reviews on epidemiology of work-related gradual process disorders: Development of an evidence base for the acceptance of claims
Applicants: Mark Boocock, Peter McNair, Robin Griffiths, Peter Larmer, Fiona Treveylen, David Tappin, Natasha Moloczij. Funding: ACC

Research Studentships 2009

Assessing therapeutic relationships in physiotherapy
Jessica Besley, AUT Contestable Summer Studentship. Supervisors: Kathryn McPherson & Nicola Kayes

The hopes and priorities of people with aphasia in the post-acute rehabilitation period
Felicity Bright, Masters . Supervisors: Nicola Kayes, Claire McCann (UoA) , Kath McPherson

Exploring the relationships between self reported physical activity level, fatigue and return to work following mild traumatic brain injury
Mark Shirley, Masters. Supervisors: Kath McPherson and Alice Theadom

A qualitative exploration into the process of external memory aid training by occupational therapists

Development of a new measure of work ability for injured workers.
Joanna Fadyl, Masters (Kate Edgar Scholarship), (Awarded 1st Class Honours). Supervisors: Kath McPherson, Philip Schluter

Sustaining one’s own health and wellness while supporting a stroke survivor: Partners’ and spouses’ perspectives
Natalsha Moloczij, Masters (Awarded 1st Class Honours). Supervisors: Deborah Payne, John Smith

Community participation for New Zealand children who have had a traumatic brain injury
Margaret Jones, PhD (HRC scholarship). Supervisors: Kath McPherson, Clare Hocking

Facilitating activity for well being in people with Multiple Sclerosis
Nicola Kayes, PhD. Supervisors: Kath McPherson, Philip Schluter, Denise Taylor

Disabled men and experiences of fatherhood.
Marta Leete, PhD (HRC scholarship). Supervisors: Kate Diesfeld, Kath McPherson, Kirk Reed

Strength for ‘Task Training’ to optimise locomotor function following stroke: A pilot study
Nada Signal , PhD (HRC Scholarship). Supervisors: Denise Taylor, Gwyn Lewis, Kath McPherson

4. RECENT RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS (2009)

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS
Fadyl, JK. McPherson KM, Schluter PJ, Turner-Stokes L. Factors contributing to work-ability for injured workers: Literature review and comparison with available measures. Disability and Rehabilitation. in press.

Brain Inj 23(5):433-444.


ELECTRONIC PUBLICATIONS
Moloczij, N., K. McPherson, J. Smith, and N. Kayes, Help seeking at the time of stroke: Stroke survivors’ perspectives on their decisions. 2009 Podcast for the International Program of Psycho-Social Health Research, CQUUniversity

REPORTS

McPherson, K.M., Fadyl, J., Rutherford, S., Bright, F., Kayes, N. and Moloczij, N. Rehabilitation

Person Centred Rehabilitation Team (PCR ),
http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-institutes/hrc/research-activities/personrehab
Some proud moments....

Several of our team have competed post graduate studies this year; Bernadette Guerin graduated in May with a PhD in psychology from the University of Auckland; Natasha Moloczij’s Masters thesis ‘Sustaining one’s own health and wellness while supporting a stroke survivor: Partners’ and spouses’ perspectives’ was awarded First Class Honours in August this year; Joanna Fadyl was also awarded First Class Honours for her Masters thesis ‘Development of a new measure of work ability for injured workers’ at the December graduation ceremony at the Civic; and Sandy Rutherford also graduated in December with a Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences (Occupational Practice).

The Faculty Research Awards were announced earlier this month, and we are very please to say that Kath McPherson was awarded the Faculty Award for Research Excellence. We would also like to congratulate the other ward winners: Emerging researcher- Dr Erica Hinkson; Research Team - Neurological Rehabilitation Research Team (Denise Taylor and team), and Supervisor - Patria Hume.

Some scary moments?!....

The team as been fundraising again at the MS Society Footloose Fun Walk in Auckland, and for Movember in Wellington. All funds raised from the Footloose event will go towards the many crucial support services and programmes that MS Auckland provide for the hundreds of people living with this debilitating condition in the Auckland region. We have collectively raise about $560 for the two charities, and the website is still open for donations! … www.fundraiseonline.co.nz/

Photos, from top: Kath McPherson and Joanna Fadyl; Natasha Moloczij; Graduation procession; Bernadette Guerin; Jessica Besley; Gary Bird (pre and post!); Joanna Fadyl, Marla Leete and Bump, Greta Smith, Sandy Rutherford, Kuba Leete and Ella Smith