

# Health Sciences Research Program

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# HK – Pathways

- Sociology + politics + health = public health social science (+ rusty clinical knowledge)
- NGO activity:
  - Past Vice-President (Policy) for Public Health Association of Australia
  - Immediate past national convenor, Australian Women's Health Network and 4<sup>th</sup>/ 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Women's Health Conferences
- Activist for women's health and gender equity – local, state and national policy, and women's health services
- Recently appointed to WHO Social Determinants of Health Commission Knowledge Network on Women and Gender Equity

# Health Science staff

- All PhD qualified
- One group (all on short-term contracts) has strengths in health promotion, community and health development including international health development using social science methods – quant including epidemiology, and qualitative
- A second group (all tenured) has strengths in bioscience and lab research

# HK research program

- Causes of inequalities in health at local levels and strategies to increase equity
- Community-based health promotion
  - Interventions
    - Evidence-based, multi-level, intersectoral
    - Workforce development
- Policy to reduce inequalities in health
  - Gender equity
  - Health promotion

# Theme 1: Inequities

- Relationships between macro-level determinants and their influence on local social and community factors
- Action requires a solid base of comprehensive local community data collected and analysed to understand the causation factors involved in inequalities

# Theme 2: Community-based health promotion

- Health promotion conceptualised across a continuum from downstream to upstream

# Framework for Health Promotion Action



**Downstream**

**Midstream**

**Upstream**

<b>Disease Prevention</b>	<b>Communication Strategies</b>	<b>Health Education &amp; Empowerment</b>	<b>Community &amp; Health Development</b>	<b>Infrastructure &amp; Systems Change</b>
Primary	Health Information	Knowledge	Engagement	Policy
Secondary	Behaviour Change Campaigns	Understanding	Community Action	Legislation
Tertiary		Skill Development	Advocacy	Organisational Change

**Primary Care Approaches**

**Lifestyle/Behaviourist Approaches**

**Socio-ecological Approaches**

*(Source: Murphy B & Keleher H, 2003)*

# Theme 2: Community-based health promotion

- Health promotion conceptualised across a continuum from downstream to upstream
- Evidence is clear that health inequalities will only be overcome with a strong focus on upstream action/interventions
- Strong evidence that a focus on risk factors/behaviours without focus on material factors is ineffective
- Health promotion approaches required include community engagement, community development, health promotion policy, workforce and organisational capacity

# Theme 3: Interventions

- Interventions:
  - Evidence-based, multi-level, intersectoral
- Evidence-based health promotion
- Working upstream requires multi-level health promotion
- Health is not created in the health sector...many indicators are influenced by a wide range of factors – to improve them requires correspondingly wide sets of actions

# Theme 4: Policy

- Tackling macro and local social, economic and environmental causes of inequality requires policy action
- Health outcomes need to become more prominent in social justice policy
- Policy operates at the levels of local, state and federal governments, and in organisations –public and private

# Current research program

- Gathering comprehensive data on local context and specific groups including understanding of local capacity to tackle inequalities
  - Understanding the nature of inequalities - such as identifying which groups are at high risk of social exclusion and why
  - Exploring more deeply, local issues raised by DACM profile study such as socio-cultural issues that contribute to inequalities – eg violence against women, health literacy esp among aged populations
  - Jackie Doyle, Research Fellow will lead this work

# Current research program

- Department of Veteran's Affairs
  - Contract to provide Health Promotion Advisory Services to DVA Victoria
  - Research agenda about evidence based interventions and partnerships will connect with healthy ageing agenda of HSPP
  - Nerida Joss, Research Fellow is leading the DVA work
  - Discussions underway to establish collaboration with DEPH (Alfred group) and their research program on health of veterans

# Current research program

- Systematic review of chronic disease self-management for DHS with International Diabetes Institute
  - Due to be completed April 06
- Effectiveness of outdoor psychosocial programs in mental health rehabilitation, funded by OutDoors Inc through Helen McPherson Trust
  - Due to be completed May 06 – Nerida and Jackie

# Mental health promotion

- VicHealth funded work just complete
  - Evidence-based health promotion resource to be released next week
  - Workshops in every DHS Region to launch the resource
  - Linked to policy and interventions that will reduce inequalities
  - Follow-up grant applications in development

# Pending research applications

- DHS Public Health Grant on Intervention Mapping in Neighbourhood Renewal
- Lead Applicant (of 5) on NHMRC Capacity Building application led by Professors Lenore Manderson and Don Campbell
- Leading a consortium bid for VicHealth funding to establish Health Inequalities Secretariat
- ARC Linkage to seek PhD scholarship for Nerida Joss

# Future directions

- More permanent staff establishment for Health Science Group
- Increase profile of HSc at Peninsula
  - Expand u/g degree programs
  - Establish PG Diploma
  - Actively promote HDR opportunities in Health Social Sciences
  - Link with DPH group at Dept EPH
- Interdisciplinary collaboration on grants to establish research program for HSSc at Peninsula