Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the staff and students of the Department of General Practice who contributed to this annual report.

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Contents

Message from the Head of Department 3
Strategic plan 5
Executive team 6
Department of General Practice staff 7
Working with our stakeholders 10
  Collaboration with Medicare locals 10
  Collaboration with other organisations 12
  Clinical Placement Networks 12
  General Practice Affiliate Program 13
Teaching 15
  Undergraduate teaching 15
  Graduate teaching 16
  At a glance 17
  Clinical Postgraduate Fellowship Program 18
  Academic registrars 19
  Continuing professional development for GPs 19
Research 21
  Building research capacity 21
  MAGNET: Melbourne East Monash General Practice Database 22
  Departmental research themes 24
  Research projects 26
  Higher degree research students 31
Events 33
  Forthcoming events 38
  Celebrating our people 39
Publications 41
From the Head of Department

I am very proud to present the Department of General Practice’s Annual Report for 2012.

Monash University’s Department of General Practice was established more than 35 years ago, and is one of the largest general practice teaching departments in Australia. Situated within the School of Primary Health Care, the Department’s core business is to teach medical students and contribute to the understanding, application, and advancement of general practice. Now, perhaps more than ever, the general practice and primary health care environment in which we work is rapidly changing. The Commonwealth Government’s national health reforms, with their increased emphasis on primary health care, present us with some exciting challenges and opportunities.

We recognise the importance of working together with others to respond to and engage with the change that is upon us. We are working hard to maintain excellence in teaching and grow and strengthen our discipline. We believe that by exposing our students to state of the art, high quality general practice and primary care we will nurture in them an interest in pursuing a career in general practice. We are also undertaking world-class, cutting edge research to inform clinical practice and policy questions in primary health care.

Our strategic plan guides us in all that we do, and assists us to achieve our vision of operating a new, integrated model of education and research within the emergent primary health care systems and structures. I would like to thank my executive team and all academic and professional staff for their hard work in 2012 in helping us move towards fulfilling our vision.

I look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with our GP affiliates, Medicare Locals, academic colleagues, and all of those in the primary health care community in 2013.

Professor Danielle Mazza
Head of Department
Figure 1. Progress to date on achievement of strategic plan
Strategic plan

Monash University is an energetic and dynamic university committed to quality education, outstanding research and international engagement. A member of Australia’s Group of Eight research-intensive universities, it seeks to improve the human condition and is committed to a sustainable future.

Monash University’s Department of General Practice is a world leader in academic general practice, particularly in general practice education. The Department, located in Melbourne Australia, was founded in 1975 and in 2001 became part of the School of Primary Health Care in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

The Department of General Practice’s Strategic Plan 2011–13 outlines our core business, our vision, and the nine strategies that we are implementing to achieve our vision.

Our core business

The Department of General Practice teaches medical students and contributes to the understanding, education, advancement, and practical application of general practice in Australian and international communities.

Our vision

The Department of General Practice will operate a new, integrated model of education and research within the emergent primary health care organisations (Medicare Locals).

In order to undertake our core business more effectively in the future, we will create a hub and spoke model where central administration and coordination of the Department’s activities occurs in the hub, and teaching and research occurs in the spokes. Our vision is to partner with Medicare Locals (primary health care organisations) to deliver vertically integrated teaching, interprofessional education, research and evaluation, and professional development, and to assist in the development of the local workforce.

Our strategies

The Department’s nine strategies are presented in Figure 1, along with examples of progress to date. Our five enabling strategies are focused on developing or enhancing a range of departmental elements, systems and processes, with the aim of ensuring that we have a sound platform upon which to grow and develop our education, research and international activities.

Our four enhancing strategies are focused on designing and implementing a new model for the Department to better align with primary health care reform and to grow and develop our education, research, and international activities and programs.
Executive team

**Professor Danielle Mazza, Head of Department**

Professor Danielle Mazza, MD, MBBS, FRACGP, DRANZCOG, Grad Dip Women’s Health, is an academic general practitioner and author of Women’s Health in General Practice (2nd edition published in 2011). She previously held the positions of Medical Director of Family Planning Victoria, National Director of Quality Assurance and Continuing Education for the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), and Associate Professor of Family Medicine at the International Medical University in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Her research interests include women’s health, cancer, and chronic disease prevention.

Danielle currently leads a program of translational research that is focused on the early diagnosis of cancer and improving the delivery and uptake of preventive care in the general practice setting. She is a member of the executive of the Primary Care Collaborative Cancer Clinical (PC4) Trials Group and is the chief investigator on a project funded by Cancer Australia, which aims to develop and implement a guide for general practitioners for the early detection and referral of lung cancer. Her methodological expertise in guideline development and the implementation, development, and trial of complex interventions is underlined by her current role as the chair of the implementation subcommittee of the RACGP’s Quality Care committee. Danielle is also a board member of the Bayside Medicare Local and the Victorian Metropolitan Alliance (RTP), and she remains active in clinical general practice at the Brighton Medical Clinic.

**Dr Peter Barton, Deputy Head of Department, Undergraduate Coordinator (Year 4)**

Dr Peter Barton, MBChB, MBA, FRACGP, FRCGP, DCH, is an academic general practitioner whose main areas of interest are undergraduate education (particularly ethics, resuscitation and communication skills) and assessment of clinical competence. Peter was previously the inaugural Director of Clinical and Communication Skills at the University of Glasgow and visiting professor of clinical skills and communication at the Medical Education Development Centre, Gifu University, Japan in 2010. He is the Undergraduate Coordinator for the general practice component of the year 4 MBBS curriculum. He co-chairs Theme IV (clinical skills) of the Monash University MBBS degree, and recently led the review of clinical skills teaching for the MBBS curriculum. He is currently undertaking a doctorate in education at the University of Glasgow by distance learning, focusing on the experience of novice practitioners during resuscitation, and has just concluded data collection. His practice is in Mount Waverley, Melbourne.

**Associate Professor Jan Coles, Undergraduate Coordinator (Years 1 and 2) and Chair of the Research Committee**

Associate Professor Jan Coles, PhD, MMed(Women’s Health), MBBS, DCH, GCHE, is an academic general practitioner who has worked in clinical medicine and general practice for 25 years. She is the Undergraduate Coordinator of the clinical skills component of Year 1 and 2 of Monash University’s MBBS curriculum and co-chair of the Year 1 and 2 Management Committee. She is also the chair of the Department’s Research Committee, an active member of the School of Primary Health Care’s Research Committee, and the Early Career Researcher (ECR) research coordinator for the School. Jan’s research in 2012 has concentrated on the impacts of childhood sexual abuse on Australian women’s health. She has a national and international research profile in this area. This work, with data from the Australian Women’s Longitudinal Health Study, was supported by a 2012 Faculty Strategic Grant, and undertaken in collaboration with Danielle Mazza, Deborah Loxton from the University of Newcastle and Angela Taft from La Trobe University.
Dr Heather Grusauskas, acting Director of Graduate Studies

Dr Heather Grusauskas, PhD, MED, GradDip, BED, Cert ED, Cert IV in workplace training and assessment, FAIM, is the acting Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of General Practice and is leading the development of the new Masters of Family Medicine degree. She is an education and training leader with a track record in designing, developing and implementing creative, best practice training models that deliver skilled and engaged practitioners. Heather spent 10 years in medical and inter-professional clinical education at Austin Health and Melbourne Health. She is a member of the School of Primary Health Care Education Committee, the Postgraduate Medical Council of Victoria (PMCV) Education Sub-committee (and retired chair), the International Clinical Skills Conference Committee, the Southern CPN SLE strategic planning committee, and the Victorian Metropolitan Alliance’s Research Evaluation and Education Development Sub-Committee. Heather is also a Team Leader and Surveyor for the PMCV. She is convenor of the 2012 John Murtagh Update Course and co-convenor of the international conference The Skilful General Practitioner which will be held in Prato, Italy in 2013. Heather has made a valuable contribution to the health sector through papers on mentoring, clinical skills acquisition, simulation training, clinical handover, communication, curriculum frameworks, and trainee preparedness.

Department of General Practice staff

**Head of Department**
Professor Danielle Mazza

**Deputy Head of Department, Undergraduate Coordinator**
Dr Peter Barton

**Acting Director of Graduate Studies**
Dr Heather Grusauskas

**Undergraduate Coordinator**
Associate Professor Jan Coles

**Associate Professors**
Associate Professor John Dixon
Associate Professor Peter Schattner
(Clinical) Associate Professor Sanjiva Wijesinha

**Emeritus Professors**
Emeritus Professor Merilyn Liddell
Emeritus Professor John Murtagh AM

**Senior Lecturers**
Dr Peter Barton
Dr Ian Chenoweth
Dr Craig Hassed
Dr Andy Morgan
Dr Les Segal

**Lecturers**
Dr Ann Drillich
Dr Phillip Feren
Dr Bradley Frew
Dr Cathy Grech
Dr Naomi Harris
Dr Nadida Kachkouche
Dr Henry Taub

**Senior Research Fellows**
Dr Kay Jones

**Research Fellows**
Dr Bianca Brijnath
Dr Samantha Chakraborty
Dr Kumari Wickramasinghe

**Research Assistants**
Amy Allen
Josefine Antoniades
Caroline Bambrick
Ruby Biezen
Adeline Lee
Nabita Singh
Dr Donna Southern

**Professional staff**
Marion Daniels, Undergraduate Administrator, Year 1 and 2
Dr Maria de Leon-Santiago, Research Administrator
Claudette Gerreyen, Undergraduate Administrator, Year 4
Theresia Mathias, Senior Administrative Officer, Graduate Studies
Pearl Noronha, Personal Assistant to Professor Danielle Mazza
New team members

Amy Allen

Amy Allen commenced as a research assistant with the Department of General Practice in September 2012. She is currently recruiting and interviewing participants for a study into the role of General Practitioners in injured workers’ return to work. She completed her Bachelor of Behavioural Neuroscience at Monash University and recently completed her Honours degree in Psychology at the Australian Catholic University (ACU), where she is a member of the ACU Cognition and Emotion Research Lab. She also works as a research assistant at Caulfield Pain Management Clinic and at Monash Injury Research Institute (MIRI). Her previous work has involved both qualitative and quantitative research in the areas of compensable injury (WorkSafe/TAC), road safety, and the management of chronic pain. She is interested in addiction and neuropsychology, and is studying towards a Graduate Diploma in Alcohol and Other Drug Studies.

Maria de Leon-Santiago

Dr Maria de Leon-Santiago joined the Department of General Practice as a research administrator in May 2012. She works closely with Professor Danielle Mazza and assists in the management of new and ongoing research projects. Maria’s strengths lie in her written communication skills, having previously worked as an Associate Medical Writer for a medical communications company. She has published 13 peer-reviewed articles and has extensive experience in writing and editing manuscripts and communication materials for both academia and industry. Maria also previously worked as a research fellow at the Department of Immunology at Monash University. Her research interests included investigating the molecular mechanisms of peanut allergy and the immunological mechanisms underlying sublingual immunotherapy for house dust mite allergy. With a strong background in academic research and medical writing, Maria hopes to contribute to the research and publication success within the Department.

Bradley Frew

Dr Bradley Frew joined the Department of General Practice in September 2012 as a lecturer. He teaches the Year 4 General Practice curriculum, and has been involved with transitioning the online part of the curriculum into Equella (a digital repository for teaching and learning content) and developing the GP Affiliate Network. This is not Bradley’s first role at Monash. Between 2003 and 2005 he worked with the Centre for Medical and Health Sciences developing written and online resources for the MBBS curriculum, which changed from six years to five years. In his seven year absence from Monash he completed his General Practice training and was a Lieutenant Medical Officer in the Royal Australian Navy. He works two days a week at the Department and works clinically three days a week in Hastings.

Adeline Lee

Adeline Lee joined the Department of General Practice as a senior research assistant in January 2012. She is working on the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women’s Health, exploring the impact of sexual violence on Australian women’s physical and mental health. She is also a psychologist and has been an active clinician and researcher since 2005, working clinically across public hospitals and community health centres as well as in university settings. Adeline has conducted clinical and research work in the area of mental health with an interest in trauma and its impacts upon vulnerable populations. In addition to working at the Department, she is also completing her doctoral thesis with Monash University’s School of Psychology and Psychiatry (co-supervised by Jan Coles), examining the relationship between women’s mental health and childhood maltreatment as well as clinicians’ practice and views on supporting survivors.
Nabita Singh

Nabita Singh joined the Department of General Practice in September 2012 as a research assistant. She is a Bachelor of Biomedical Science and a Master of Bioscience Enterprise (MBE) honours graduate from the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Through this program Nabita has worked with two pharmaceutical companies in NZ in the areas of intellectual property for pharmaceutical development, and research and development management. Whilst working with these companies she completed her Master’s thesis on organisation design and change management within a generic pharmaceutical company. Prior to this Nabita worked as a clinical research assistant within the Nutrition and Cancer Department at the University of Auckland looking at selenium supplementation in males that were considered at high risk for prostate cancer. Through these experiences she has gained significant qualitative and quantitative research experience, including authorship in refereed journals. In her new role, she hopes to gain more research and authorship experience. She is working with Dr Bianca Brijnath and Professor Danielle Mazza, investigating the current knowledge and attitudes of GPs, employers, compensation scheme personnel, and injured workers in facilitating injured workers return to work.

Donna Southern

Dr Donna Southern joined the Department of General Practice in August 2012 as a research assistant. She is working on the project, ‘Investigating symptoms of lung cancer: A guide for general practitioners’, with Professor Danielle Mazza and Dr Kay Jones. Donna has a wide-ranging work history in the area of general practice and health systems research spanning the past two decades. Donna completed her PhD in 2011 at the University of Melbourne’s Department of General Practice. In her doctoral thesis on measuring consumers’ experience of health information flow, Donna argues for the importance of including patient reports on their experiences of informational continuity in the general practice setting for quality improvement initiatives.

Staff departures

Andrew Beveridge, Executive team member and Under-graduate Coordinator (Year 4)

The Department of General Practice thanks Dr Andrew Beveridge for the tireless effort he has put in to undergraduate teaching over many years. He was the architect of the year 4 clinical attachment and personally recruited many practices into teaching. He left the Department in June 2012 to take up an appointment in the Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service in Kununurra. His first experience of this community practice was in 2011 when he used long service leave to work in two separate rural indigenous communities in Western Australia. He found the experience enormously rewarding and it was clear when he came back to Monash that he would look for further opportunities to return to indigenous medical practice. The Department has given him an adjunct appointment to help him maintain his links with Monash University. He continues to explore further exciting opportunities for our students to go to this underprivileged area and will work with us on this. He is also keen to be a conduit for any GP affiliate who wishes to do some rural practice.
Working with our stakeholders

The Department of General Practice has a wide range of stakeholders including Medicare Locals, health professionals working in general practice and primary care, general practice affiliates, patients of general practitioners, clinical placement networks, regional general practice training providers, primary care professional groups, local hospital networks, other primary health care research organisations, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), the Australian Medical Association (AMA), and local, state and federal government. The Department’s stakeholders within Monash University include undergraduate and post graduate students, the School of Primary Health Care, the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, and the broader university.

Collaboration with Medicare locals

Medicare Locals coordinate primary health care delivery and address local health care needs and service gaps across Australia. The Department of General Practice works in close partnership with four ‘local’ Medicare Locals in metropolitan Melbourne: Bayside, Inner East Melbourne, South Eastern Melbourne, and Frankston-Mornington Peninsula.

Taking a regional approach

The Department of General Practice’s vision of partnering with regional Medicare Locals to deliver vertically integrated teaching, professional development, inter-professional education, and research and evaluation is well on the way to being realised.

In September, the Department facilitated a regional forum to explore further opportunities for Monash University and the four south-eastern Melbourne Medicare Locals to work collaboratively at a regional level, to achieve both collective and individual objectives. Participants identified a number of potential benefits of working collaboratively.

There was general agreement that a collaborative regional approach could address shared objectives in relation to both research (for example, developing an evidence base and research translation) and education (for example, ensuring the local health workforce meets local needs, providing high quality clinical education via a network of community-based settings).

The forum discussed regional research opportunities including promotion of a Practice-based Research Network across a range of primary health care providers in the region, so as to provide a primary care ‘laboratory’ in which research could take place. Regional education opportunities were also discussed including the concept of establishing a Community-based Clinical School.

Reflecting the enthusiasm expressed at the meeting for regional collaboration in primary health care, the five organisations are currently working together to develop these concepts. In addition to this, a memorandum of understanding and terms of reference will be developed between the five organisations in due course.

The Melbourne East Clinical Education Alliance

The Department of General Practice is a member of the Melbourne East Clinical Education Alliance along with the Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local, Deakin and Melbourne universities, the Eastern Health Clinical School, the Victorian Metropolitan Alliance, Eastern Health, and the Victorian Faculty of the RACGP. The Alliance has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and its objective is to build effective clinical education linkages within the Melbourne East region by:

- expanding the capacity for clinical education placements
- providing students with high quality practice-based clinical education
- providing practice-based clinical educators with professional development opportunities
Medicare Locals partnering with the Department of General Practice

Bayside Medicare Local
Bayside Medicare Local operates in Melbourne’s southern suburbs, from inner Melbourne to the edge of the Mornington Peninsula. It covers five local government areas (Port Phillip, Stonnington, Glen Eira, Bayside and Kingston) over 215 square kilometres and services a population of 625,000. The catchment has a high population density, significant cultural diversity and wealth disparity, and a growing and ageing population. There are more than 5000 primary care professionals in the area.

Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local
Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local covers four local government areas (Boroondara, Manningham, Monash and Whitehorse) over 319 square kilometers and services a population of 618,000. The area is culturally diverse, with 34 per cent of the population born overseas. Within the catchment, Boroondara has the highest number of people aged 85 years and over in Victoria, and hospitalisation for alcohol and drug use is significantly higher than the Victorian average. Monash has higher levels of public housing, and refugee and humanitarian settlement, and lower workforce participation.

South Eastern Melbourne Medicare Local
South Eastern Melbourne Medicare Local covers three local government areas (Greater Dandenong, Cardinia, and Casey) over 1821 square kilometres and services a population of 454,000. The catchment is socioeconomically diverse and is experiencing some of the fastest population growth in Australia – by 2022, the population is expected to increase by 39 per cent. The region is a major area for resettlement of refugees in Australia, with 37 per cent of the population born overseas.

Frankston-Mornington Peninsula Medicare Local
Frankston-Mornington Peninsula Medicare Local covers two local government areas (Frankston and Mornington Peninsula), services a population of 281,000, and has an area of 854 square kilometres. The population increases by 200,000 over the summer months. The catchment is a mix of urban and semi-rural, with significant wealth disparity.
enabling collaborative policy advocacy to government
• conducting research on leading edge methods of practice-based clinical education
• piloting and evaluating partnership models of practice-based clinical education.

Melbourne East Monash General Practice Database (MAGNET)

The Department of General Practice is working collaboratively with the Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local on the Melbourne East Monash General Practice Database (MAGNET) project. MAGNET is a new research platform for general practice health care data that will drive targeted research in the field of primary health care by providing a robust evidence base for knowledge translation activities and publications. For more on this research project, see page 22.

Collaboration with other organisations

Monash University’s Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, which includes the Department of General Practice, has a memorandum of understanding with the Inner East Community Health Service that covers academic and research activities. This includes research collaboration in areas of mutual interest and other academic activities including education and training.

The Department is also developing a memorandum of understanding with the Melbourne Medical Deputising Service for collaboration on academic and research activities. The scope of the memorandum includes joint research and teaching opportunities, student placements, and database analysis.

Clinical Placement Networks

As a clinical education stakeholder, the Department of General Practice provides high-quality clinical learning experiences to students. Clinical placements enable our students to apply learning to practice, have a positive learning experience, and be well-prepared for the work-place. It also provides an opportunity for clinical staff to be challenged and participate in a two-way learning process. In 2011, eleven Clinical Placement Networks were established across Victoria to facilitate locally driven, stakeholder-led clinical placement initiatives and partnerships. Clinical Placement Networks provide a platform for partnership building, local coordination, research, and innovation in clinical placements.
In 2012, 236 GPs from 133 general practices were involved in the clinical teaching of Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) year 4 students from Monash University – overall, a total of 1058 clinical placements (Figure 2). These practices are predominantly located in the Southern and Eastern Clinical Placement Networks.

The Department is collaborating with the Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local (via the Melbourne East Clinical Education Alliance) and the Bayside Medicare Local through the relevant Clinical Placement Networks to support the recruitment of new practices and community-based clinical settings for medical students undertaking general practice placements.

General Practice Affiliate Program

The Department of General Practice established the Monash General Practice Affiliate program in recognition of the dedication and commitment shown by GPs in the community who provide high-quality teaching and supervision to our MBBS students during their clinical placements. The program provides those GPs with the opportunity to benefit from Monash resources such as electronic access to the Monash University library and intranet, discounts for seminars, workshops and events, an open invitation to attend the Department’s weekly Academic Seminar Series, a complimentary copy of one of several textbooks authored by a departmental staff member, involvement in departmental research activities, and an invitation to attend our Annual General Practice Affiliate Awards Dinner.

Our General Practice Affiliates are a key component of our ability to deliver our curriculum and they represent GPs of the highest quality and calibre. We are grateful for their contribution and commitment to the education of our future medical workforce.

Figure 2. Number of MBBS year 4 student clinical placements across Melbourne’s Medicare Locals
Teaching

The Department of General Practice is a world leader in general practice education. The Department has a high profile in undergraduate teaching, both in the delivery and coordination of the 5-year Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) curriculum. The Department is also well known for its contribution to the medical education and continuing professional development of established general practitioners, and offers a wide range of postgraduate courses in family medicine and non-award education activities. Over the past two decades, more than 1300 doctors have graduated from Monash’s postgraduate award courses in family medicine and more than 4000 GPs have attended refresher courses. In our quest for continuing improvement, the Clinical Postgraduate Fellowship Program and Master of Family Medicine were reviewed this year, and as a result the Department is offering exciting new programs in 2013 and 2014 respectively.

Undergraduate teaching

The Department’s undergraduate teaching program focuses on the integration of problem-solving, communication, and clinical skills, to enable holistic, evidence-based care of patients and their families within the community. The Department coordinates and administers the teaching of clinical skills in years 1 and 2 of the MBBS, and the general practice rotation for year 4 students. Departmental staff also supervise Bachelor of Medical Science (Honours) students. The philosophy of the Department is to foster an enthusiastic and caring approach to teaching students, with well-structured programs, transparent assessment and feedback, pastoral care, and flexibility. Associate Professor Jan Coles is the undergraduate coordinator for the year 1 and 2 teaching program and Dr Peter Barton is the undergraduate coordinator for the year 4 teaching program.

Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS)

Year 1 and 2 general practice teaching program

Year 1 and 2 clinical skills’ teaching by the Department constitutes 25 per cent of the teaching load in the first two years of the MBBS. Students learn the basics of history-taking, examination skills, and simple procedural skills. Teaching innovations in 2012 include:

- increasing the role of real patients in the teaching of clinical skills to students, thus enhancing their understanding of patient-centred care.
- establishing a program of on-campus clinical contact for students
- introducing competency-based assessments for students.

Evaluation of the Year 1 and 2 teaching program has resulted in three research projects:

- an investigation into how competency-based assessment affects students’ learning
- an international project looking at the hidden curriculum, partnering with Queen’s University in Canada
- a recently-completed evaluation of peer physical examination in early teaching.

Year 4 general practice teaching program

During the year 4 general practice teaching program, students participate in an innovative mixture of lectures on general practice problems, tutorials, practicals, and simulation sessions where they practise consulting skills and discuss cases. Teaching is primarily delivered by clinicians who work in general practice. The nine-week teaching program is delivered as part of four rotations through the year: general practice, medicine of the mind, women’s health and children’s health.

In recent improvements, the time that students spend on general practice clinical placements has increased while tutorial size has decreased, and there has been an increased focus on key government priorities in primary health care such as preventative health and chronic disease management.
In 2012, the year 4 teaching program had another very successful year:

- 252 students were taught, each of whom had 2.5 days per week of clinical experience, an increase from 2 days per week in 2011
- 133 practices were involved in teaching, spread from Mt Eliza and Frankston to Sunshine
- 236 GP affiliates taught our students and of those, 20 tutors from 14 practices were new to teaching
- Student evaluations continued to be very positive, improving significantly from 2011.

The Department also introduced additional clinical teaching sessions in alcohol and other drug treatment settings. GPs specialising in this clinical area offered students valuable insights into the management of patients with these problems. Students were also placed with the Melbourne Medical Deputising Service (MMDS) where they accompanied doctors during out-of-hours house calls. Evaluations of both sessions were very positive.

In 2013, the Department will continue to further expand the range of clinical settings offered to students by recruiting GP emergency clinics for additional out-of-hours placements. In 2013, we also intend developing a closer working relationship with our teaching GP affiliates. Firstly, key departmental staff members will visit individual practices to discuss how we can assist with their teaching. Secondly, the Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local (IEMML) will run the first of a program called Teaching on the Run for GPs involved in undergraduate supervision.

Teaching on the Run is a highly regarded and nationally accredited program for clinical teachers designed by the University of Western Australia. The program, initially established for hospital-based clinicians supervising junior doctors, has now been extended to other health professionals including nursing and midwifery, allied health and veterinary science. Evaluation of the program has been excellent, with participants noting the program is relevant and enjoyable, and improves confidence and skills. If IEMML’s pilot is successful then the Department intends to offer a gradual roll out of this for all tutors over time.

**Graduate teaching**

Many GPs and family physicians in active practice recognise the need for upgrading knowledge and skills, and some yearn for the intellectual stimulation that a structured program provides. In addition, those new to the profession may wish to formalise and expand their knowledge and qualifications in specific areas. As adult learners, each has specific needs and barriers exist that must be overcome to meet these needs. For example, busy GPs and family physicians may lack the time to travel to a teaching institution.

Acknowledging this, the Department of General Practice offers a suite of graduate courses that are relevant for day-to-day practice and available via off-campus learning. These courses provide for students to learn at their own pace, balance study with work, and achieve the satisfaction of completing a prestigious postgraduate qualification in a unique clinical discipline. Dr Heather Grusauskas is the acting Director of Graduate Studies.

**Master of Family Medicine (Clinical), Master of Family Medicine (Research)**

The Master of Family Medicine is a part-time, off-campus course designed for GPs in Australia and overseas who wish to expand their knowledge and skills in areas relevant to general practice. The course provides the opportunity for candidates to develop clinical and teaching skills within a general practice setting. The Master of Family Medicine (Clinical) can be completed in three years, and the Master of Family Medicine (Research) can be completed in four years.
The Master of Family Medicine underwent review this year, and as a result the Department is designing an exciting new three-year curriculum that will replace the current Masters courses in 2014 – and for the first time, the course will be delivered online. In the first two years, candidates will study four core units – principles of general practice, learning and teaching in general practice, introduction to research methods, and applied research. In the third year, candidates will choose from a range of electives, such as chronic disease management and evidence-based health care. As a consequence of the Master’s review, a new research project has been instigated on learning preferences for GP practice.

**Graduate Diploma of Family Medicine**

With approval, an exit option is available from the Masters of Family Medicine after successful completion of two years study, awarding candidates with a Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine.

**Graduate Certificate in Medical Acupuncture**

The Graduate Certificate in Medical Acupuncture (GCMA) is the only postgraduate course in medical acupuncture in Australia designed for practising GPs. The GCMA provides an understanding of medical acupuncture, both historically and philosophically, and teaches the skills to practice medical acupuncture safely in appropriate clinical settings and for appropriate clinical conditions.

This highly successful program is a combination of off-campus learning modules, workshops, and clinical attachments, and attracts increasing interest from domestic and international audiences. On completion of this module, practitioners have the essential knowledge and skills to practice medical acupuncture to a standard and rigor accepted by the Australian College of Medical Acupuncturists and Medicare Australia.

**Short certificate courses**

The Department of General Practice offers a comprehensive off-campus program of short certificate courses that provide general practitioners the opportunity to upgrade skills and knowledge, including managing emerging concepts in practice, accessing information, and critically analysing literature. In 2012, certificate courses were offered in general practice prescribing, medical ethics, stress management, pain management, child health and ophthalmology.
Clinical Postgraduate Fellowship Program

The Department’s Clinical Postgraduate Fellowship Program provides an opportunity for overseas-trained GPs to develop knowledge and skills in their selected area of clinical interest. The fellows also gain an understanding of the healthcare system and academic general practice in Australia, and skills in research and undergraduate teaching. Each program is specifically designed to meet the needs of the individual and their employer or sponsor.

The Clinical Postgraduate Fellowship Program was redesigned in 2012, and now comprises four elements:

1. Clinical placements and/or voluntary placements in relevant subject areas
2. Self-directed study in relevant subject areas
3. A research project, with support from an academic mentor
4. Undergraduate teaching, with support from an academic staff member.

This year the Department has four clinical postgraduate fellows: Muraya Alshahrani, Raad Alshahrani, Hatim Alzahrani, and Ruba Jaber.

Muraya Alshahrani

Muraya Alshahrani is a family physician from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He trained in the Family Medicine program at Alhada Hospital in Taif, graduating in 2005 (Saudi Specialty Certificate in Family Medicine and Arab Board in Family Medicine). Prior to his arrival at the Department of General Practice, he was the Director of Academic Affairs Administration at Alhada Hospital for three years. He joined the Clinical Postgraduate Fellowship Program in March 2012 to pursue his main interest, chronic disease management, a major health problem in most countries. Muraya joined Monash University because of its excellent reputation both in the Middle East and globally. As part of the program, Muraya will undertake research on improving the quality of care for patients with chronic diseases.

Ruba Jaber

Ruba Jaber is a family medicine specialist from Jordan. She completed her primary Bachelor of Medicine and General Surgery at the Jordan University of Science and Technology, graduating in 2004. After that, she did an internship year at the University of Jordan Hospital, then joined the Family Medicine training program at the University of Jordan/University of Jordan Hospital for four years. In June 2009, she was awarded the higher specialty in Family Medicine with Honours degree. In September 2009, she qualified as a Family Medicine Specialist with the Jordanian Medical Council and the Jordanian Board of Family Medicine. Although she is passionate about all aspects of family medicine, she is particularly interested in women’s and children’s health, so in February 2011 she joined the Clinical Postgraduate Fellowship Program in women’s and children’s health. Her 2-year fellowship is sponsored by the University of Jordan.

Raad Alshahrani

Raad Alshahrani is a consultant family physician from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He completed his Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBBS) at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, and he is certified by the Saudi and Arab Boards of Family Medicine. Raad joined the Department of General Practice’s Clinical Postgraduate Fellowship Program in July 2012, and his main area of interest is palliative care. Prior to his arrival at the Department of General Practice, he worked at the Department of Family Medicine in King Fahad Hospital, Jeddah. Raad is sponsored by the Saudi Ministry of Defence and Aviation.
Hatim Alzahrani

Hatim Alzahrani is a family physician from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He completed a four year Family Medicine residency program in Saudi Arabia, and is certified by the Arab and Saudi Boards of Family Medicine. Prior to joining the Department of General Practice’s Clinical Postgraduate Fellowship Program in July 2012, he worked at the Ministry of Health’s Taif Mental Hospital as a family physician. Hatim’s 2-year fellowship is sponsored by the Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia. His main interests are addiction medicine and mental health, and he will spend a year working on each. He is strongly motivated in these areas because of the high prevalence of substance abuse and mental health disorders in Saudi Arabia, and the lack of specialist centres and qualified physicians.

Academic registrars

Academic registrar posts are salaried, half-time placements at universities that occur in conjunction with clinical practice. The purpose of the post is to enable registrars to develop skills in research, teaching, project work, and critical evaluation. The Department of General Practice has a long history of supporting and training GP academic registrars, and proudly counts GP luminaries such as Professors Michael Kidd and Chris Silagy amongst its alumni.

Dr Sophia Samuel

Academic registrar Dr Sophia Samuel has been a valued member of the Department of General Practice since February 2011. She is completing a qualitative project on health seeking behaviours among Tamil refugees in south east Melbourne through the Southern Academic Primary Care Research Unit. She also tutors Year 4 medical students and is a Publications Fellow with the Australian Family Physician. Sophia believes academic registrars have a great opportunity to ‘sample’ academic life. She describes her time at the Department as an opportunity to be intellectually challenged and broaden her understanding of the importance of general practice. She enjoys the balance and synergy that working as an academic provides to clinical practice. Sophia’s clinical training has been in rural Victoria. She has also improved her public speaking skills by involvement in departmental initiatives and benefitted from educational events held by the Department and other research and general practice conferences. Most of all Sophia values the inspirational general practitioners – researchers and educators – that she has met during her time at the Department.

The Department looks forward to welcoming Dr Michael Gu in 2013. Michael’s research will focus on medication compliance in the elderly. Although two-thirds of Australians over the age of 60 years use four or more drugs, local studies confirm that non-adherence is common in older Australians. Michael’s study aims to understand why this problem exists in elderly populations and how current forms of provider-patient communication may be contributing to medication non-adherence in elderly patients.

Continuing professional development for GPs

In addition to the graduate courses outlined above, the Department of General Practice convenes an annual update course for general practitioners (see page 34) and is coordinating a 3-day conference, “The Skill General Practitioner”, in Prato, Italy in May 2013 (see page 38).

The Department is also involved in developing continuing professional development (CPD) activities that are accredited in the RACGP Quality Improvement and Continuing Professional Development program (QI&CPD). The RACGP QI&CPD program supports the development and maintenance of GP skills and lifelong learning, and assists practising doctors to fulfill their CPD requirements for their medical registration. The Department continues to meet RACGP Accredited Activity Provider requirements, and therefore CPD activities are accredited in-house by our Education Activity Representative. The Department’s graduate courses (including short certificate courses) are accredited in the RACGP QI&CPD program, as are education activities developed as part of our research projects for knowledge translation.
Research

The Department of General Practice has a strong reputation for undertaking high quality research. Our mission is to provide leadership in the development, implementation and dissemination of general practice and primary health care research that informs policy and practice, and is linked to improved health outcomes for the Australian community. The Department understands the importance of research translation, and strives to undertake research with a strong practical application.

The Department has leading general practice researchers who are networked with national and international peers, and with established stakeholder networks. We believe in working in partnership to achieve our research aims and enhance research translation, so we conduct multidisciplinary research together with our collaborators and strategic partners. These include people from across the School of Primary Health Care, the Faculty of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences, and other Monash University Faculties. We also collaborate with other universities and independent research institutes, Medicare Locals, consumers and consumer groups, non government organisations, industry, professional organisations, and government.

The Department supervises research students from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines, and highly values their contribution. We offer postgraduate research opportunities (higher degree programs, the Clinical Postgraduate Fellowship Program, and the Academic Registrar program) and undergraduate research opportunities (the BMedSc(Hons) program and three new summer research scholarships).

Building research capacity

The Department of General Practice is actively building research capacity by engaging general practitioners and allied health professionals working in the primary health care sector in research as either users of research, participants in research or as research leaders. Examples include:

- the development of the Melbourne East Monash General Practice Database (or MAGNET) (see page 22)
- the development of a Practice-based Research Network in collaboration with regional Medicare Locals (see page 10).

The Department is also building research capacity by supporting and strengthening the capacity of individual staff members and students to develop research skills and capability through:

- the work of the Research Committee
- the Early Career Researcher Group
- the Writing Group
- three new summer research scholarships for undergraduate students.

The Department’s Research Committee meets monthly and is chaired by Associate Professor Jan Coles. The committee supports the development of staff and student grant applications and actively promotes research by the Department (see page 38 for the annual research showcase).

The Early Career Research Group is facilitated by Bianca Brijnath, and meets at an informal monthly lunch to discuss relevant issues. The Department’s Writing Group meets every month to review research publications prior to journal submission in a safe supportive environment.
What is MAGNET?

The MAGNET (Melbourne East MonAsh GeNerAl PracticE DaTabase) research platform is a unique dataset capable of generating evidence to inform primary health care policy and practice and improve health outcomes for patients in Australia. MAGNET has emerged from a collaboration between the Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local (IEMML) and Monash University. These key partners bring complementary strengths and assets to this research initiative.

IEMML is a large and active GP network in metropolitan Melbourne, and one of the first Medicare Locals in Australia. IEMML has generated a rich dataset of health care data from general practice during the last five years derived through the use of data extraction tools.

Monash University brings to this initiative existing strengths in research methodology, data analysis, general practice and primary health care research, e-Health research, and knowledge translation. These capabilities will be used to access, analyse, and interpret the information provided by IEMML’s rich dataset, which can then be used to answer key research questions to inform the National Primary Health Care Strategy, a key component of the National Health Reform Agenda.

What are the aims of MAGNET?

The MAGNET research platform provides a unique and expansive dataset together with data analysis and research capabilities to enable the development of a robust evidence base to support targeted and priority-driven strategic research in primary health care. Guided by an advisory panel representing key stakeholders in primary care and research and data analysis, the MAGNET team will undertake research that delivers real answers to policy and practice questions. Our specific emphasis on knowledge exchange, dissemination, and publication and translation to community, consumer and policy audiences will lead to more efficient and improved primary health care services and better health outcomes.

What data does MAGNET consist of?

The MAGNET dataset provides a unique snapshot of general practice in Australia. This dataset consists of various data fields of information collected cyclically from the computerised medical records of general practices. The IEMML dataset comprises of data extracts from member general practices, with an overall sample size approaching one million patients, 50 per cent of whom have been through a 15-month cycle (> 1 visit) with a general practice. The de-identified data contains information about:

- Patient demographics
- Allergies
- Risk factors
- Diagnoses
- Medications prescribed
- Pathology results
- Antenatal care
- Medicare item numbers billed
- Practice characteristics
- GP demographics.

The data derived from MAGNET captures elements of a patient’s medical record together with the practice setting in which care is being delivered. The MAGNET data also provides information about a set of patients that can be studied over long periods of time (longitudinal studies). The cyclical data collection allows for analysis of changes of practice, which can show improvement in service delivery, provide the opportunity for rapid evaluation of new policy initiatives, and allow for the testing of interventions through randomised clinical trials.
How will MAGNET operate?

Funding

The Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash University has provided $500,000 seed funding for the MAGNET project during the next three years. Additional funds for future research projects will be obtained by applying for grants from other funding bodies.

Governance structure

Advisory board members

Mr Robert Wells (Chair) Director, Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute
Professor Danielle Mazza Head, Department of General Practice, Monash University
Associate Professor Christopher Pearce Director of Research, Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local
Dr Linden Smibert Chair, Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local General Practitioner
Ms Elizabeth Corbett Director, Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local
Mr Michael Feehan Director, Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local
Mrs Marianne Shearer Chief Executive Officer, Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local
Professor Grant Russell Head, School of Primary Health Care, Monash University and Director, Southern Academic Primary Care Research Unit
Professor Ian Smith Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Research Infrastructure), Monash University
Professor Paul Bonnington Director, Monash e-Research Centre, Monash University
Professor Christopher Reid Associate Director, Monash Centre of Cardiovascular Research and Education in Therapeutics
Professor Ross Coppel Deputy Dean (Research), Monash University
Ms Lisa McGlynn Head, Health Group, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Mr Mark Booth First Assistant Secretary, Primary and Ambulatory Care Division, Department of Health and Ageing.
Departmental research themes

Research at the Department of General Practice sits under two broad themes:
1. Improving the quality of care in general practice
2. Optimising primary care practice and broader health care systems.

The Department’s research topics span both of these themes, and include:
- research translation
- chronic disease prevention, management and follow-up
- medical and inter-professional education
- e-health solutions (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Department of General Practice research themes

The Department also has a special interest in:
- population-specific research (for example, women’s health, infant and child health, men’s health and refugee health)
- improving access to care for populations with specific needs (for example, migrants and refugees, family violence victims and survivors).

The Department’s current research is outlined in more detail in Table 1 and in the next section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research translation</th>
<th>Chronic disease</th>
<th>Medical and inter-professional education</th>
<th>e-health</th>
<th>Population-specific research</th>
<th>Improving access to care for populations with specific needs</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>MAGNET: Melbourne East Monash GeNeral PracticE DaTabase</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investigating symptoms in lung cancer – A guide for general practitioners</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementing guidelines to routinely prevent chronic disease in general practice</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative Care Cluster Australia (CCCA) Project</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIT to Work: GPs Facilitating Injured Workers ReTurn to Work</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Osteoarthritis and use of anti-inflammatories in general practice</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>Which test is best? A randomised controlled trial to evaluate family history as a triage tool in screening for colorectal cancer</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>Effects of medical pluralism and cross-border drug flows on the health-seeking behaviour of Indian-Australians and Anglo-Australians with depression</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>Changes in men’s health after laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding surgery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solid versus liquid satiety study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do pre-operative gastrointestinal hormone responses to a standard meal predict the weight outcomes of Lap-Band® surgery?</td>
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<td>Students’ experience of a placement with a medical deputising service</td>
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<td>Cardiopulmonary resuscitation competence: A survey of undergraduate preparation in Australasian medical schools</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Review of a teaching kit for general practitioner clinical teachers</td>
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<td>The health effects of childhood sexual violence for young Australian women</td>
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Table 1. Departmental cross-cutting research themes
Research projects

Mazza D, Olver I, Jones K.

Lung cancer poses an enormous burden on the Australian health system and economy, causing more deaths per annum than breast, prostate and ovarian cancers combined. The symptoms of lung cancer can often be unspecific thereby hindering early diagnosis and thus contributing to the high mortality rate associated with late diagnosis. Symptoms of lung cancer are likely to present in general practice as part of routine care or during the management of other diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic heart failure, and coronary heart disease.

Phase one of this project involved creating and publishing an easily accessible, evidence-based guideline for general practitioners on the effective investigation and referral of people who have or may have lung cancer. The guideline was developed using the ADAPTE framework for guideline adaptation. This framework seeks to improve the use of contextually relevant guidelines while maintaining evidence-based principles. The guideline will be supplemented by a national directory of multidisciplinary teams. In 2013, online educational and promotional material will be developed to support its uptake and use. This will provide GPs with a suite of tools aimed at facilitating a prompt and efficient investigation of patients with symptoms of lung cancer.


Collaborative Care Cluster Australia (CCCA) is a consortium of world-leading organisations in healthcare services, education, industry, and research and development with a shared common interest in chronic disease prevention and management. Working in collaboration with Precedence Health Care, this project utilised cdmNet, an online collaborative care planning service. The project comprised four research components:

1. An education/research component, to evaluate the impact of an educational program for GPs based on cdmNet (Jones K, Biezen R, Vogel S, Newton J, Piterman L.)


The Preventive Evidence into Practice (PEP) study is an exciting project that aims to implement the evidence for preventing chronic disease into practice by identifying the barriers and facilitators of organisational change, and developing and evaluating an innovative and flexible model for guideline implementation. Funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council, RACGP, the National Heart Foundation of Australia (NHFA) and the Bupa Health Foundation has been secured to implement and evaluate an intervention to improve implementation of preventive guidelines in primary care settings.


There has been little effort to systematically screen individuals for colorectal cancer (CRC) according to their familial risk, despite national guidelines in place, resulting in a trend toward risk-inappropriate screening. The study aims to evaluate the utility of an online CRC familial risk tool in assisting GP triage to improve the uptake of risk-appropriate referral for CRC screening. Phase one of this study piloted this risk tool, which was modified to improve usability for participants. The tool is now being implemented in a large clustered randomised controlled trial with participants from general practices divided into the intervention (the online CRC familial risk tool plus 12 month follow-up) and control group (12 month follow-up, followed by the online CRC familial risk tool).

In the education/research and qualitative components, a number of factors were discovered that encourage or challenge GPs’ use of cdmNet for care planning. The quantitative and data mining components demonstrated that there are small but definite clinical improvements in the care of patients diagnosed with diabetes, and suggest the benefits of conducting reviews of GP Management Plans (GPMPs), rather than only creating a GPMP and not following it up.
Difficult to treat depression. AstraZeneca ($268,814) 2012.

Piterman L, Jones K, Castle D.

Managing and treating depression in primary care is common and a leading cause of disease burden worldwide. However, there is only a small body of evidence-based literature to assist in the management of difficult to treat depression (DTTD) in primary care, and GPs’ perceptions of DTTD may vary. There are no Australian studies that explore these perceptions in GP settings. The aims of this research are to conduct a review of the literature to identify definitions and management options for DTTD and treatment resistant depression, and through focus groups, to examine the challenges and benefits experienced, and the knowledge, attitudes and practices of GPs working in primary care.

Effects of medical pluralism and cross-border drug flows on the health-seeking behaviour of Indian-Australians and Anglo-Australians with depression. National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Early Career Public Health Fellowship ($294,000) 2012–15.

Brijnath, B.

This project will compare Indian-Australian and Anglo-Australians cross-cultural understandings of depression, and health-seeking behaviours. With increased cross-border flows of medicines and medical pluralism, and the stigmas associated with mental illnesses there is need to understand how to improve under-utilisation of existing mental healthcare services and explicate currently self-medicating and self-treatment practices among both cohorts. There is need to know how Indian migrants and Anglo-Australians access different medical systems, how drug treatments are interpreted, and the effects of poly-pharmacy and irrational drug use on the body and wellbeing. Using qualitative methods, data is being collected from approximately 200 participants.


Mazza D, Collie A, Kosny A, Brijnath B.

General practitioners (GPs) play an important role after work-related injury. They treat injury and illness, give information to workers’ compensation boards about the injury, and provide recommendations about return-to-work ability. Using in-depth interviews this qualitative study aims to evaluate the current knowledge, attitudes and practices of GPs, injured workers, employers, and compensation schemes in enabling GPs to facilitate injured workers to return to work (RTW). Project results are anticipated to yield insights into the different perspectives on the barriers and enablers to RTW, why these barriers exist and how they might be overcome.


Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) have a well-established place and are among the most widely used classes of medications to treat pain and inflammation, such as in the management of osteoarthritis. NSAIDs can however cause serious gastrointestinal (GI) complications including ulceration, perforation, haemorrhaging and death. This project will (a) focus GPs’ use of anti-inflammatories and examining evidence for the source of blood loss, for example, through fall in haemoglobin, low Fe levels, presence of occult blood in stools, upper GI endoscopy, lower GI endoscopy, or where upper and lower endoscopy is normal, small bowel examination, and (b) develop a professional development and education/teaching program to upskill GPs.


Dixon J, Jones K, Barton D.

Obesity has become a worldwide public health problem and severe obesity causes, among other things, impaired quality of life above and beyond the impact of medical complications of the disease. Sexual dysfunction has been described as encompassing a spectrum of problems that include erectile dysfunction (ED), orgasmic function, sexual desire, intercourse satisfaction and overall satisfaction. As sexuality is intimately linked with an individual’s perception of their body image, it is not surprising that morbidly obese patients express dissatisfaction when questioned about their sexual wellbeing. The aim of this study is to test the hypothesis that sexual function and overall quality of life will improve in men with severe obesity following sustained weight loss following laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding surgery (LAGB).

Solid versus liquid satiety study. 2011–12.

Dixon J, Jones K, Jones L.

The prevalence of obesity (BMI >30kgm2) and severe obesity (BMI >40kgm2) has dramatically increased over the past few decades. It is a highly complex and difficult condition to successfully treat. As part of the surgery process, health practitioners advise laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding surgery (LAGB) patients to avoid calories in the form of liquids such as soups and to opt for calories in solid food as these are believed to be more satisfying. The aims of this project are to:

- determine whether or not the consistency of food impacts on the level of satiety achieved in patients with a LAGB
- compare the level of satiety achieved after consuming a solid meal versus a liquid meal, in LAGB patients and non-LAGB patients.
Do pre-operative gastrointestinal hormone responses to a standard meal predict the weight outcomes of Lap-Band® surgery? Allergan ($81,783) 2010–12.

Dixon J, Lambert G, Dixon A, Le Roux C, Jones K, McGee T. There is a wide variability in outcome following laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding (LAGB) surgery for weight loss. Many patients lose more than half of their excess weight by 2 years after surgery, while approximately 15 per cent of patients have what is considered an unsuccessful outcome, losing less than 25 per cent of their excess weight by 2 years. Very few behavioural, physiological or social factors seem to predict patients' weight-loss response to LAGB surgery. In this longitudinal study, the response of multiple biochemical and hormonal factors to a standard meal prior to LAGB surgery will be measured, and patients will be followed for two years to look for potential predictors of outcome.


Piterman L, Paul C, Gibberd R, Sanson-Fisher R, McNeil A, Segal L, Vogel S, Kirby C, Thepwongsa I. This research aims to examine whether population-level effects can be achieved by implementing best-evidence practice change strategies for the care and management of diabetes. It will test the effectiveness of an intervention package comprising 1) continuing medical education, 2) access to a diabetes specialist, 3) reminders, and 4) individual and comparative feedback. This is being offered to general practitioners in select rural communities. This study is one of the first attempts to evaluate continuing medical education at a population level in Australia. The study has national significance for diabetes care in that it uses an intervention strategy appropriate for both rural and metropolitan GPs, has mass reach, is potentially sustainable as it does not require a high GP time commitment, and has low proportional roll-out costs. The study also has international significance in terms of being translatable to other diseases where pathology-based testing can be linked to care and management.

Students’ experience of a placement with a medical deputising service (A pilot study). Monash University Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences ($1,000) 2011–12.

Beveridge A, Barton P, Jones K. MBBS coursework includes student placement rotations, usually in general practitioners’ clinics, community health centres, hospitals wards, and hospital emergency departments. Generally, these placements do not provide opportunities to experience after hours medical emergency cover, such as overnight, weekends and public holidays. These out-of-hours services are provided by medical deputising services, also known as locum services or out-of-hours services. These services are responsible for providing a high proportion of on-call medical emergency cover for general practice, thus are a potentially rich and diverse source of clinical experience. Students placed at the Melbourne Medical Deputising Service (MMDS) will be asked to compare their experiences at MMDS with their placement experiences in other environments.


Barton P. This research is investigating the lived experience of young doctors who have delivered cardiopulmonary resuscitation within the last two years. Understanding their experience will offer insights into the way that graduates are prepared for this responsibility. Data collection (face-to-face interviews) has concluded, and data analysis is under way.


Barton P, Jones K, Beveridge A. Within Australia and New Zealand, CPR competence has increased in importance, particularly in a rural environment as novice practitioners are increasingly exposed to significant levels of clinical responsibility. Curricula must be informed by published international standards of care. The aim of this survey was to identify the educational strategy and value attached to resuscitation within each Australasian curriculum. The survey established that across Australasia almost all medical schools taught CPR early in their curricula and offered individual courses in advanced life support. Clinical competence was established using a mix of formative and summative assessments. There was general support for the idea of a common standard, with Immediate Life Support the favoured option. Several schools wished to retain aspects of their own emergency program especially where their graduates were likely to have less supervision, for example in remote or rural clinical environment.
What’s Delivered, What’s Received: The hidden curriculum in medical education. 2012.
Coles J, Phillips S.

Two of Canada’s physician framework for medical education (CanMEDS) key competencies, advocate and professional, speak to the importance of equality, dignity and empathy in the doctor patient relationship. These values and behaviours are more effectively modelled than taught. Much of the curriculum that students receive is not captured by reading the content or hearing the words used in teaching but is, instead, absorbed from the educational environment. Teachers are role models as well as sources of information. Who the teacher is and how he or she behaves defines the hidden/received curriculum, which some have found to be more influential than the intended curriculum. This study will explore how discrimination and equality weave their way into the hidden curriculum and will begin to define best practices in modelling an egalitarian approach to patients.

Chenoweth I, Jones K.

The output of medical graduates from Australian medical schools was projected to increase by 81.3 per cent between 2005 and 2012. Access to patients is key to the development of students’ clinical skills and it has been suggested that, in some Australian teaching hospitals, too few patients are available for teaching. In contrast, clinical placements in community settings provide medical students with more patient contact and more time supervised. The aim of this project is to seek the views of teachers about the GP Teachers’ Handbook, suggestions to improve the document, and other ways that the Department could support their teaching.

The health effects of childhood sexual violence for young Australian women. Monash University Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences Strategic Grant ($15,000) 2012.
Coles J, Mazza D, Taft A, Loxton D, Lee A.

Violence accounts for the greatest burden of disease for women aged 18–44 in Victoria, but the impact of sexual violence needs addressing because it is less well understood. Health care professionals have difficulties identifying and responding to violence. Sexual violence is particularly problematic because of the stigma and shame associated with it and the difficulties associated with making enquiries about such a sensitive topic. Better understanding the health impacts of sexual violence on Australian women and how Australian women present to services could assist health professionals to better identify and respond to the needs of women who have been sexually abused.

Coles J, Astbury J, Dartnall E.

Researching with sexual abuse survivors can be traumatic. Secondary traumatic stress or vicarious trauma is defined as “the transformation of the therapist’s or helper’s inner experience as a result of empathetic engagement with survivor clients and their trauma material”. Secondary traumatic stress is a process that impacts on different people in different ways. It is a pervasive feature of working with traumatised clients and is a cumulative response to traumatic material. It can be triggered by either a one-off exposure to a significant issue or repeated exposure to a range of issues and incidents. It can have a profound impact on individuals, no less debilitating than the primary trauma. Context and support for researchers varies across the world, for example the Chief Investigator’s (JC) research is based in Melbourne, Australia with facilities and support for regular debriefing with expert trauma therapists, while internationally other researchers worked in war zones and refugee camps without support. This project aims to better support researchers internationally by developing a briefing paper and safety guidelines.
Bachelor of Medical Science (Honours)

The Bachelor of Medical Science (Honours) is a twelve month degree program for MBBS students and graduates. The BMedSc(Hons) program embeds students in a research setting with Australian and internationally recognised researchers. Students learn skills relating to data analysis and the communication of scientific ideas in oral presentations and a written thesis. The program offers candidates a range of projects across an array of research streams, matching student interests to projects respectively. In 2012, two students undertook their BMedSc(Hons) with the Department of General Practice, Alfi Almasyhur and Rachel Prawer.

Alfi Almasyhur

Alfi completed a BMedSc(Hons) with the Department of General Practice in 2012, part way through his undergraduate medical studies in Indonesia. Supervised by Associate Professor Peter Schattner, he researched the attitudes and beliefs of patients with serious mental health disorders to their formal diagnosis. Alfi conducted a review of the literature and interviewed five patients within the general practice of Dr Ignatius Cannizzo, who has a special interest in GP psychiatry. Three key themes were identified from the data using thematic analysis – diagnosis as a trigger for exploration, knowledge as a basis for understanding the diagnosis, and encouragement for recovery through acceptance. The study showed that having a diagnosis stimulated patients to seek further knowledge about their condition, eventually leading them to perform actions supportive of recovery. Alfi concluded that support from clinicians and people close to the patients can help them cope with their illness. After passing his BMedSc(Hons), Alfi returned to his medical studies in Indonesia.

Rachel Prawer

Rachel is a medical student at Monash University and in 2013 she will begin the fourth year of her MBBS. In 2012, she completed a BMedSc(Hons) as she was keen to gain some hands-on experience in research. She spent the year based in the Paediatric Department of Hadassah Medical Center in Ein Karem, Jerusalem, Israel, and completing a qualitative research project titled The influence of the Jewish Sabbath on treatment-seeking amongst Jewish parents. The aim of her project was to explore how the Jewish Sabbath, which imposes many restrictions on activity, influences parents’ decisions regarding treatment-seeking for their ill or injured children. Her principal supervisor is Professor Leon Piterman of Monash University and her co-supervisors are Associate Professor Peter Schattner from the Department of General Practice and Professor Dan Engelhard, of Hadassah Medical Center in Ein Karem, Jerusalem. She will present the results of her research at the Israel Medical Association World Fellowship Conference in Tel Aviv in December 2012.
Higher degree research students

Karina Gardner

Karina Gardner is an Information Management Officer with the Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local and an MPhil student with the Department of General Practice. She is researching the effectiveness of practice nursing on improving the quality of clinical recording in general practice. In 2010, she completed a Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) fellowship.

Karyn Alexander

Dr Karyn Alexander is a practising general practitioner and a PhD student with the Department of General Practice. She is researching preventive healthcare for young children in general practice and presented findings in two papers at national research conferences this year: ‘Parents’ decision-making and access to preventive healthcare for young children: What Andersen’s Model tells us at the Primary Healthcare Research Conference (July 2012), and Social and emotional health checks for preschoolers – What GPs and Practice Nurses think and implications for practice at the RACGP conference, GP12 (November 2012). In 2011, Karyn was awarded the RACGP Chris Silagy Research Scholarship. She continues to conduct research on how to increase the uptake of preventive healthcare for young children, which she aims to pilot in general practice in 2013.

Josefine Antoniades

Josefine Antoniades is a PhD student with the Department of General Practice. She completed her BSc(Hons) in Psychology in 2010 and has worked on research projects in the School of Psychology and the Department of General Practice for the past 4.5 years. Josefine was recently awarded an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) scholarship to undertake her PhD under the supervision of Dr Bianca Brijnath and Professor Danielle Mazza. For her PhD, she is investigating depression and health-seeking behaviours among South East Asian-Australians and Anglo-Australians.

Kerry Hampton

Kerry Hampton is a registered nurse and midwife and a PhD student with the Department of General Practice. She is a specialist provider of natural fertility and wellbeing education in general practice for couples who are planning pregnancy or having trouble conceiving. The observation that few women understand the fertile time of the menstrual cycle and that this may be a contributing cause of infertility led her to undertake her research on ‘Informing the development of a new model of care to improve the fertility-awareness of sub-fertile women in primary health care’. The aim of the study is to reduce the incidence of infertility in primary health care by promoting women’s agency for self-care to achieve through improved fertility literacy. ‘Fertility-awareness knowledge, attitudes and practices of women seeking fertility assistance’ was published online in July in the Journal of Advanced Nursing. In 2011, Kerry received the Family Medical Care, Education and Research (FMCER) Grant from the RACGP.

Marina Kunin

Marina Kunin is a PhD student with the Department of General Practice. She researched social policy and services in Israel with special emphasis on the health care system. Observing the response to the influenza pandemic A/H1N1 (‘Swine Flu’) of 2009 in Israel and Australia, she became interested in emergency responses to infectious diseases in primary care settings. This interest led her to undertake research that compares the experience of general practitioners during the ‘Swine Flu’ pandemic in Australia, Israel, and England. Her study aims required data collection in the three countries including in-depth interviews with general practitioners. The study provides analysis of challenges associated with the public health response to influenza pandemic in primary care settings and highlights the issues of importance to general practitioners as they implemented the influenza pandemic management policies.
Isaraporn Thepwongsa

Dr Isaraporn Thepwongsa is a general practitioner from Thailand and a PhD student with the Department of General Practice. After graduating from medicine, she worked as a lecturer at the Division of Family Medicine, Khon Kaen University, Thailand, while concurrently practising as a general practitioner. She has experience in the field of medical education and the management of chronic diseases, particularly diabetes. After working in Thailand for two years, she completed a Masters of Family Medicine (Clinical) at Monash University. She began her PhD in 2009 in the field of GP education. For her PhD, she is testing the effectiveness of online Continuing Medical Education (CME) programs on Australian rural and remote GPs’ learning outcomes, titled ‘Educating rural and remote GPs about Type 2 diabetes: Impact of online continuing medical education on GP knowledge, attitudes and practices, and barriers to online learning’.

April Prabowo

Dr April Prabowo is a general practitioner from Indonesia and a Master of Family Medicine student with the Department of General Practice. He obtained his medical degree in 2010 from the University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia, then undertook postgraduate study in hospital administration. After graduating, he joined the university faculty, and worked as an academic and a practising physician. April was granted two scholarships through the faculty, both from the Health Professional Education Quality project funded by World Bank and the Directorate of Higher Education of Indonesia. Before joining Monash he served an apprenticeship in medical education at Sydney Medical School. April’s goal is to play a leading role in clinical primary care in Indonesia. He is interested in clinical quality, patient centeredness, quality of life, human resources, medical education, health communication, and health policy and strategy.
Events

Annual GP Affiliate Awards Dinner

The Department of General Practice’s Annual GP Affiliate Awards Dinner was held at Mount Waverley on 30 November 2011. The dinner celebrates the clinical teaching excellence of GP affiliates who tutor our year 4 MBBS students. Two awards were presented at the dinner, which was attended by 58 of our GP Affiliates. The guest speaker was Professor Christina Mitchell, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Science at Monash University.

The Best New Clinical Teacher Award recognises GPs who commenced clinical teaching of year 4 medical students in 2011, and who demonstrated outstanding dedication and skill. This award was presented to Dr Danh Lam, Dr Karen Price, and Dr Steve Chao.

The Teaching Excellence award recognises GPs who demonstrate dedication and skill in the clinical teaching of year 4 medical students, and was presented to Dr Ashraf Farah, Dr James Lichtblau, and Dr Kelly Davis.
The John Murtagh Annual Update Course for General Practitioners

The Department of General Practice proudly convened the 34th John Murtagh Annual Update Course for General Practitioners on 7–9 November 2012 in St Kilda, Melbourne. The update course is a celebration of what is best in clinical general practice learning and, in an era of electronic clinical education offerings, it continues to be a mainstay in practising GPs’ educational calendar. It also provides an opportunity for GPs to network with their colleagues. The course is named in honour of Professor John Murtagh and his extraordinary contribution to Family Medicine. Although John retired in 2010, he continues to work tirelessly for the benefit of the Department of General Practice, the School of Primary Health Care, and Monash University.

More than 130 delegates from across Australia and overseas attended this year’s course. The program included presentations from clinical leaders in primary and acute care settings and from staff within the Department of General Practice. A broad range of topics were covered including key learnings in research for GPs, neurosurgery issues for GPs, assessing and managing obesity in general practice, handling chronic gastrointestinal symptoms in general practice, and mindfulness for practitioner well-being and sustainable performance. This year, we also offered an optional workshop on cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), providing an opportunity for attending GPs to extend their skills.
Academic seminar series

The Department of General Practice runs a weekly academic seminar series relevant to anyone working in general practice and primary care. The seminars are held on Wednesday between 12:30–1:30 pm at the Notting Hill campus. Attendance is open to Department and School of Primary Health Care staff and students, and external stakeholders such as GP affiliates, Medicare Locals, RACGP staff and GP training organisation members.

The seminar series covers a variety of topics and speakers (both departmental and external) come from a wide range of academic and clinical fields. Some of the presenters and topics in the past year include:

- Associate Professor Dawn Stacey, University of Ottawa: Translating research into practice.
- Dr John Furler and Professor Jane Gunn, University of Melbourne: The CASE-D project on diabetes.
- Marianne Shearer, CEO, Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local: What’s happening?
- Professor Sara Carmel, Ben-Gurion University, Israel: A study on the will to live.
- Dr Susan Phillips, Queen’s University, Canada: The accidental researcher.
- Associate Professor Lena Sanci, University of Melbourne: General practice teaching on the other side of the Yarra.
- Professor Grant Russell, Head of School, School of Primary Health Care, Monash University: Update on the School of Primary Health Care.
- Dr Chris Pearce, Director of Research, Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local: The many faces of electronic data.
- Professor Colette Browning, Director of Primary Care Research, Monash University: Monash research methodology: Using focus groups - the why, when, who, where and how.
- Natalie Carvalho, Centre for Health Policy, Programs and Economics, University of Melbourne: An introduction to health economic evaluation – from theory to practice.
- Associate Professor Liz Molloy, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University: Medical education.
- Anne Peek, CEO, South Eastern Melbourne Medicare Local: Medicare Local: how is it going?
- Professor Mieke Van Driel, Head, Academic Discipline of General Practice, University of Queensland: From evidence to practice: a journey in research.
- Associate Professor Morton Rawlin, RACGP Victoria Faculty: What’s happening at the RACGP?
- Professor Ben Canny, Deputy Dean, MBBS & Head of Program, Central MBBS, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University: Ethics.
- Professor Gerard Gill, Deakin University: Developments Deakin University’s Medical School.
Forthcoming events

Showcase of Department of General Practice research

The Department’s second research showcase, Working together to improve the quality of care in general practice, will be held on 2 May 2013. The showcase will present current general practice research relevant to clinical practice and GP education. Keynote speakers will focus on community engagement to improve the quality of care. Last year’s showcase was attended by over 80 people including department stakeholders and staff, and interested collaborators from other universities, government departments, community agencies and research institutions.

The Skillful General Practitioner, International Conference, Prato, Italy

The Department of General Practice is convening an international conference, The Skillful General Practitioner in Prato, Italy from 15–17 May 2013. Prato is a beautiful Tuscan city with a historic centre and a vibrant, cultural life. The conference will be held at the Monash University Prato Centre, located in an 18th century palace, the Palazzo Vaj, an impressive building with an open air terrazzo, surrounded by medieval towers.

The conference theme, the Skillful General Practitioner, consists of three intertwined and related sub-themes that are relevant for any general practitioner or healthcare professional interested in this specialised area of medicine. The three sub-themes are:

1. The contemporary doctor
2. The careful doctor
3. The compassionate doctor.

These sub-themes will deliver stimulating and sometimes controversial insights to assist general practitioners and healthcare professionals to meet some of the challenges of modern family practice. The ‘contemporary doctor’ theme will explore the treatment of new epidemics with a focus on the efficient and effective management of chronic illness. The ‘careful doctor’ theme will look at diagnostic and therapeutic skills (including ‘hands on’ workshops). The compassionate doctor theme will increase knowledge and expertise in mindfulness for practitioner wellbeing and sustainable performance.

Key speakers include:

- Professor John Murtagh, widely respected general practitioner and author whose books include ‘Cautionary Tales’, ‘Patient Education’, and ‘General Practice’.
- Dr. Craig Hassed, renowned speaker and multiple author whose books include ‘The Essence of Health’ and ‘Mindfulness for Life’.
- Professor Michael Kidd, general practitioner, primary care researcher, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Flinders University, incoming president of the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA), and a past president of the RACGP.
- Associate Professor John Dixon, NHMRC Senior Research Fellow, member of the scientific advisory board of Obesity Australia, and a past president of the Australian and New Zealand Obesity Society (2007–09).

The conference venue is ideally located for both its cultural ambience and its ease of bringing together delegates and their families from around the world. Prato has regular 25-minute train connections to Florence and is in easy reach of many international airports. ‘Early bird’ registration is available until 21 February 2013.
Celebrating our people

Awards

Dr Bianca Brijnath

Early career researcher Dr Bianca Brijnath has been selected for the prestigious International Primary Care Research Leadership program at the University of Oxford. She is one of eight postdoctoral researchers globally selected for the program, which is hosted by the Department of Primary Care Health Sciences at Oxford. Bianca currently holds an NHMRC Early Career Fellowship and specialises in cross-cultural research and mental health research.

The two-year leadership program, commonly known as ‘The Brisbane Initiative’, is designed to foster and develop future leaders in primary care research. She describes her achievement as a “big honour” that would not have been possible without the support of her head of department and supervisor, Professor Danielle Mazza. The International Primary Care Research Leadership program consists of three residential meetings in Oxford. Participants are encouraged to identify their own development needs, form peer learning sets and establish a two-year follow-up program.

Kerry Hampton

PhD candidate Kerry Hampton received two awards in the past 12 months – the 2011 Nurses Memorial Centre Scholarship, for study in 2012, and the 2012 mid-year ‘Babe’ Norman Scholarship. The Nurses Memorial Centre Scholarship is for nurses and midwives undertaking postgraduate study at an Australian University or other accredited higher education institution. The purpose of the scholarship is to increase access to postgraduate study for nurses and midwives as part of the Nurses Memorial Centre’s mission to act as ‘a living memorial’ by advancing the nursing profession through education. The three-year ‘Babe’ Norman Scholarship, also offered by the Nurses Memorial Centre and funded by the Rosemary Norman Foundation, is available to nurses and midwives enrolled in a research doctorate at an Australian university.

Josefine Antoniades

PhD candidate Josefine Antoniades recently received an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) for 2012–15. The APA is funded by the Australian Federal Government, and its objectives are to support postgraduate research training in the higher education sector and provide financial support to postgraduate students of exceptional research promise.

Associate Professor John Dixon

In April, Associate Professor John Dixon won the Obesity Surgeons Society of Australia and New Zealand Annual Scientific Meeting, Poster Prize: Dixon J, Cobourn C. Risk of gastric pouch enlargement with adjustable gastric banding in premenopausal women: sex hormones may play a role?

Associate Professor John Dixon and Dr Kay Jones

In October, Associate Professor John Dixon and Dr Kay Jones won the Alfred Hospital Senior Medical Staff Prize for Clinical Research for their poster: Dixon J, Schachter L, O’Brien P, Jones K, Grima M, Lambert G, Brown W, Bailey M, Naughton M. Surgical versus conventional therapy for weight loss treatment of obstructive sleep apnoea: a randomised controlled trial.

In October, their paper won the Australian and New Zealand Obesity Society Annual Scientific Meeting Elsevier Award for Best Paper – Adult Clinical Research: Dixon JB, Browne J, Lambert GW, Jones KM, Reddy P, Pouwer F, Speight J. Severely obese people with Type 2 diabetes experience impaired emotional well-being and socio-economic disadvantage. Results from Diabetes MILES Australia.
Additions to the Department

The Department had two junior additions in 2012. Early career research fellow, Dr Samantha Chakraborty gave birth to Jay (below, left), and MPhil candidate, Karina Gardner gave birth to Eli (below, right).
2012 publications

**Book**


**Book chapter**


**Journal article: refereed article in a scholarly journal**


van Hecke O, Jones KM. The attitudes and practices of general practitioners about the use of chaperones in urban Melbourne, Australia. International Journal of Family Medicine. 2012; Article ID 768461, 6 pages. DOI: 10.1155/2012/768461.

Journal article: editorial, invited commentary, letter or note


Research report: commissioned government or industry


Conference publication: full written refereed paper


Other


2011 publications

Book

Mazza D. Women’s health in general practice. 2nd ed. Sydney: Elsevier Australia; 2011.


Book chapter


Journal article: refereed article in a scholarly journal


Journal article: editorial, invited commentary, letter or note


Research report: commissioned government or industry


Conference publication: full written refereed paper


Guidelines and position statements


Other


Executive team: Peter Barton, Danielle Mazza, Heather Grusauskas, Jan Coles

Teaching staff: Back row, l-r, Ian Chenoweth, Peter Schattner, Phillip Feren, Henry Taub, Bradley Frew, Sanjiva Wiljesinha, Naomi Harris; Front row: Les Segal, Danielle Mazza, Peter Barton, Jan Coles

Research staff: Back row, l-r, Bianca Brijnath, Maria de Leon-Santiago, Donna Southern, Kumari Wickramasinghe, Nabita Singh, Kay Jones, Ruby Biezen, Josefine Antoniades; Front row, l-r, Peter Barton, Peter Schattner, Danielle Mazza, Jan Coles

Professional staff: Pearl Noronha, Theresia Mathias, Claudette Gerrey, Maria de Leon-Santiago