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PRIMARY
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HEALTH CARE

REHABILITATION, AGEING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING (RAIL) RESEARCH CENTRE

Member eBulletin #14

A message from the Director



Well, where did 2020 disappear to? With only a few more weeks to go until the holiday period, that is not an uncommon question in any year. But this year has been so different to any others, and this question seems to be echoing so much more. We will all be quite happy to see the new year roll in, and with it the promise of a vaccine and even greater transition towards the new covid normal.

One small thing that typified one of the significant changes for researchers this year was that a few weeks ago, I realised that my passport needed renewal (expiring in August 2021, so needs to be renewed at least six months in advance). Flicking through my old passport, even just for 2019, there was evidence of substantial travel, networking, and strengthening of national and international collaborations. I did have only one trip in 2020, returning to

Australia from New Zealand (holiday – not work) on 5 January, that was my only air travel this year. My new passport has just arrived, and I wondered what will be the next opportunity to use it. In the meantime, all of us have needed to continue to look for other avenues to communicate, network and collaborate nationally and internationally. I have participated in one international and one national conference / forum in the past two weeks, all from the luxury of my study at home. And although the technology worked well, and there were some innovative approaches to try to simulate some of the networking and interactions, unfortunately from my experiences there is nothing quite like the informal chats over coffee breaks, meeting a speaker after their presentation with a few questions, or going out for a few drinks with new and old friends after a long conference day to help build and consolidate networks and collaborations.

This will be the last RAIL e-bulletin for the year. I do want to take the opportunity to thank the outstanding efforts of the RAIL staff throughout 2020. For a new research centre within its first year of operations when covid impacted, our team have adapted well to the many challenges, and have been successful with a number of large and small grants, we have completed our first few projects, all within fairly tight timelines and budget, and have built a growing brand recognition for RAIL. We have also just been accepted as a Collaborating Research Centre for the Australian Association of Gerontology. We look forward to even stronger outcomes in 2021.

Remember, if you have colleagues, or people new to Monash who would like to become a Member of RAIL, and thereby be on our email communications and e-bulletin distribution list, please complete the Member survey [online](#).

The RAIL staff wish all of our RAIL members and RAIL partners a happy, relaxing and energising holiday period with family and friends, and look forward to working with you all into 2021.

Seasons greetings.

Professor Keith Hill

Member profile

Dr John Gardner

John is a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Social Sciences at Monash University. He is a Medical Sociologist with a PhD from Brunel University London, and undergraduate degrees in both social sciences and health sciences.



As a social scientist, John is interested in the social, political and economic factors that shape healthcare systems. His research examines the factors that impede the development of high quality, integrated patient-centred healthcare, particularly in relation to neurology and neurodegeneration. His previous projects have focused on the implementation of deep brain stimulation for movement disorders, and the preparedness of national healthcare systems for the delivery of regenerative medicines.

John is the recipient of an Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (ARC DECRA). As part of this fellowship, he is currently undertaking a project titled 'Australian Public Hospitals of the Future'. This project examines how public hospitals in Australia are evolving in light of anticipated societal and technological changes. The aim of the project is to ascertain what public hospitals of the future will *most likely* look like, and to consult with various stakeholders (e.g. patient advocacy groups, professional associations) to explore what public hospitals of the future *should look like*. The project will identify ways of embedding patient-centred values within the public health system.

Grant success



World Health
Organization



The COVID-19 global pandemic and access to assistive technology: voice of users and providers

Ethics Project ID 26972

Dr Natasha Layton, A/Professor Libby Callaway and Professor Keith Hill of the RAIL Research Centre are conducting a rapid study on behalf of the World Health Organisation into the impacts of COVID-19 for assistive technology users, between Oct – March 2020.



In partnership with the New York-based Centre for Inclusive Policy, the study utilises regional researchers across all WHO global regions to understand lived experience of Assistive Technology (AT) access and AT use during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research aims to answer the following questions:

- i. *What are the experiences of **AT users** during the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to AT access and service delivery?*
- ii. *What are the experiences of **AT personnel** (those who deliver AT services) in relation to AT access and service delivery?*
- iii. *What are the implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic for **AT systems strengthening**?*

Events

Member forums

10th December



What does disability rights have to do with rehabilitation?

Professor Tom Shakespeare is Professor of Disability at the London School of Health and Tropical Medicine. Trained in social and political science and with a lived experience of disability and of rehabilitation, Professor Shakespeare is a bioethicist, an international disability researcher, an artist and an activist. Tom has written extensively on the social and post-social models of disability, and he was co-editor of the World Report on Disability (2011). Recent publications address disability-inclusive responses to COVID-19 in low and middle income countries and, propose a remodeling of the ICF.

Presenter: Professor Tom Shakespeare

Date/time: 10/12, 6pm Melbourne time (8am London)

Registration: [Online](#)



The banner features the Australian Human Rights Commission logo in the top left. The text reads: 'Join Human Rights Medal winner **Rosemary Kayess**, in conversation with ABC's disability affairs reporter, Nas Campanella for the 2020 **Human Rights Day Oration** Thursday 10 December, 11am (AEDT)'. On the right side, there is a photograph of Rosemary Kayess speaking into a microphone. At the bottom, it says 'Register to watch this special live online event at: <https://events.humanitix.com/human-rights-day-oration>'. To the right of the URL, it says 'Proudly sponsored by:' followed by the logos for KONICA MINOLTA and KING & WOOD MALLESONS.

Thursday 10 December, 11.00am - 12.00pm

Live online event

Join Human Rights Medal winner Rosemary Kayess for the 2020 Human Rights Day Oration.

Rosemary Kayess is a leading human rights advocate for people with disability in Australia and worldwide. Rosemary contributed to drafting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and successfully lobbied for its ratification in Australia. Last year, Rosemary was awarded the

prestigious 2019 Human Rights Medal in recognition of her work in international human rights law for people with disability.

Rosemary will be in conversation with ABC's disability affairs reporter, Nas Campanella, as they discuss Rosemary's work with the Disability Royal Commission, as well as the social transformation of CRPD and the impact it has had on the community.

Registration

<https://events.humanitix.com/human-rights-day-oration>

THE RESEARCH POWER HOUR: UNPACKING THE STRIDE TRIAL

**0830-0930 (AEST / GMT+10), FRIDAY
4TH SEPTEMBER
ZOOM WEBINAR**

The STRIDE Trial was a large US study that explored strategies to reduce injuries and develop confidence in older adults. The study was recently published in the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine.

The Institute for Musculoskeletal Health invites you to join **Dr Nancy Latham, STRIDE Study Director**, and an expert panel as they discuss the results and finer details of this impressive trial and take questions from the audience. Our expert panel will include **Professor Cathie Sherrington, Professor Vasi Naganathan** and **Professor Stephen Lord**.

To register your attendance please follow this link:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-research-power-hour-unpacking-the-stride-trial-tickets-116694021961>

The Webinar link will be emailed to registered attendees on Thursday 3rd September 2020. Please note that you can register even if unable to attend on the day to receive a recording of the webinar.

Link to STRIDE Trial Website:
<https://www.stride-study.org/>



Dr Nancy Latham



Professor Cathie Sherrington



Professor Vasi Naganathan



Professor Stephen Lord

Further information and registration

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/the-research-power-hour-professor-sallie-lamb-tickets-129971388923>

RAIL paper of the month

Levinger P, Panisset M, Dunn J, Haines T, Dow B, Batchelor F, Biddle S, Duque G, Hill KD. Exercise intervention outdoor project in the community for older people - results from the ENJOY Seniors Exercise Park project translation research in the community. *BMC Geriatr*, 2020 Nov 4;20(1):446.

This study is one of a series led by RAIL adjunct (A/Prof Pazit Levinger, from the National Ageing Research Institute) and with Professors Keith Hill and Terry Haines as part of the CI team, that strengthens the research supporting improved outcomes associated with Seniors Exercise Park use by older people.

ABSTRACT

Background: Many research studies evaluate physical activity interventions for older people in the community, however relatively few successfully promote maintenance of physical activity beyond the completion of the intervention. This study aimed to implement and evaluate the effects of sustained engagement in physical activity on mental, social and physical health outcomes through the use of the Seniors Exercise Park physical activity program for older people (the ENJOY project).

Method: People aged ≥ 60 years underwent a 12-week structured supervised physical activity program using outdoor exercise park equipment followed by 6 months unstructured independent use of the exercise park. Participants were assessed at baseline, 3 months and 9 months and completed a test battery evaluating physical activity, physical function and health related quality of life measures. Repeated measures ANOVA was used to compare differences between baseline, 3 and 9 months.

Results: Of the 95 participants, 80 (84.2%) completed the 3 months supervised program, and 58 (61%) completed the 9 month assessment (the latter impacted by COVID-19 restrictions). A significant increase in physical activity level was demonstrated following the 12 weeks intervention ($p < 0.01$). Significant improvements were also demonstrated in all physical function measures ($p < 0.01$), self-rated quality of life ($p < 0.05$), wellbeing ($p < 0.01$), fear of falls ($p <$

0.01), falls risk ($p < 0.01$), depressive symptoms ($p = 0.01$) and loneliness ($p = 0.03$) at 3 months. At the 9 months follow up, significant improvements from baseline were demonstrated in the frequency, duration and total of physical activity level ($p < 0.05$), and all physical function measures ($p < 0.05$), with no decline in these measures from 3 to 9 months. At 9 months, significant changes were observed in the health related quality of life mobility and self care domains with reductions in both fear of falls and falls risk ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The Seniors Exercise Park may be an effective modality for improving and sustaining older people's physical function and wellbeing and can be an important public health infrastructure investment in promoting physical activity for older people. Future work should focus on wider implementation of the program and on scaling up this initiative to achieve public health benefit for the community.

Conferences



Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) 53rd Conference

A number of RAIL staff presented or participated in activities at the 2020 virtual conference of the Australian Association of Gerontology (18-20 Nov). These included:

Oral presentations:

- Aislinn Lalor - Environmental scan of hospital outreach services to aged care facilities (co-authors: Denise O'Connor, Emma Gearon and Rachelle Buchbinder).
- Christina Ekegren - Nursing attitudes to reducing sedentary time in hospitalised patients: A mixed methods study.

- Keith Hill - International (Brazil-Australia) collaboration exploring health literacy for older people and their caregivers (co-authors: Chris Toye, Susan Slatyer, Elissa Burton and Alessandro Jacinto).

Poster presentation:

- Natasha Layton, Nastash Brusco and Keith Hill - Contemporary economic methods to inform policy: case studies from the assistive technology and home modifications arena.

Other activities:

Keith Hill participated in two of the activities for early career researchers:

- “Lunch with the stars” where experienced researchers were paired with early career researchers for a one on one discussion session; and
- Student and Early Career Research Group panel discussion - What I'd wish I'd known then knowing what I know now' (i.e. when you were an ECR the tips you benefited from? The photo below shows the panel discussion, led by RAIL adjunct Dr Claudia Meyer (from Bolton Clarke), with Professor Julie Byles (University of Newcastle) Associate Professor Lee-Fay Low (University of Sydney), and Associate Professor Danny Hills (Federation University).



Other presentations:

Aislinn Lalor also presented on November 24 to the "Seminars in Ageing" run by NARI/AUPOA/MH. The presentation was titled "Experiences of patients post-stroke, occupational therapists in neurology, and health professional perceptions of sleep in palliative care: Snapshots of three qualitative studies"

Co-authors: Melanie Beynon, Brianny Bolt, Rachel Laurie, Linda Barclay, Dhvani Parikh and Sarah Brown.

RAIL Research Centre Independent Living Stream Lead joining Hopkins Research Centre Panel Discussion



On 4th December 2020 at 2.30pm AEDT Assoc Prof Libby Callaway will join The Hopkins Centre 'In Focus' Research Series focused on Resilience and Adaptation in Rehabilitation. Libby will contribute to a panel discussion on a new generation and vision for rehabilitation and what inclusive, adaptable and resilient rehabilitation systems could look like into the future.

The event is free and bookings are via <https://www.hopkinscentre.edu.au/news-view/the-hopkins-centre-in-focus-research-series-on-238>

SPAHC ECR Mentoring Program - Coming soon

We are pleased to announce that January 2021 will see the launch of a new SPAHC ECR Mentoring Program, to run annually from March to November.

The SPAHC mentoring program aims to complement faculty and university mentoring programs by providing ECRs, regardless of academic level and PhD qualification, the opportunity to connect with mentors from inside and outside the SPAHC. Mentors/mentees will be matched from different departments/disciplines according to professional development goals, needs and preferences of mentees.

We encourage all experienced Monash, alumni and affiliated researchers to consider signing up to be mentors in this program.

APPLICATIONS TO BE A MENTOR OR MENTEE WILL BE OPEN JANUARY

11 - FEBRUARY 7 2021.

If you are interested, but unable to register during the application period, please contact the SPAHC ECR representatives Luke Perraton and Katrina Long at spahc-ecr@monash.edu

Early and mid-career research support activities

Although the staffing level for RAIL at this point is small, we are keen to provide support for any early or mid career researcher that we can. We are happy to provide an external review perspective of grants you are preparing as one avenue of support. If you would like to discuss possibly accessing this service, please email Cassie in the first instance (spahc.rail@monash.edu).

Member contributions

We would love to showcase current research from our members. We invite you to submit a short story (and relevant images) about any research you are working on that aligns with RAIL. Submissions are due by the 30th of each month to spahc.rail@monash.edu