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HEALTH CARE

## REHABILITATION, AGEING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING (RAIL) RESEARCH CENTRE

### Member eBulletin #6

#### A message from the Director

At this very difficult and different time for us all, we take the opportunity to hope that all our members, partners, families and friends are managing okay. Please take all the recommended precautions and health safety measures, and ensure you also do look after your own health and well-being as best as possible within these constraints.

There are some very important and sometimes unrecognised stressors that are being triggered by the impact of COVID-19 and the efforts to manage it, that impact on many of the people our research aims to benefit, as well as their families and networks. On a personal front, there have been some fairly strong discussions amongst my siblings about whether or not my frail 84 year old mother, who is carer for my father with dementia, living at home, should have all physical / face to face visits by family stopped. There are clearly two sides to this discussion – one around trying to maximally protect high risk, vulnerable people from the virus, the other being around the importance of social interaction (and that electronic interaction for this older generation is often not the same as it is for much of the younger generation). Another consideration relates to provision of the physical support that may be needed intermittently (as many people like my parents have cancelled services that involve people coming in to their homes). In my mind, there is no right or wrong answer here, but one that needs to take into account all of the needs and preferences of vulnerable and at risk individuals, and that this may differ from individual to

individual. It will certainly be valuable once the current situation settles from a research perspective to evaluate the decisions made, influencers of these decisions, and reflections on what might have been done differently if a future similar situation arises.

The current situation has also had major impact on our teaching staff colleagues in transitioning to fully on-line teaching, and obviously on students. Special thanks to both of these groups for the enormous task of adapting so well in such a short time.

Much of the current research activity that involves personal interaction has also been impacted in the short term. We have been in correspondence with several of our successful small grant recipients from last year regarding project modifications or extensions to timelines for projects. Similar discussions and changes are necessary with much of the funded research, and HDR student projects.

Several of RAIL's planned events for the coming 1-2 months have been postponed, at least in the short term. We had planned a residential aged care forum for late April – this will still go ahead, but at a later time. We had also planned to advertise another round of RAIL small grants at this time, but again have had to post-pone this activity.

Take care and stay positive.

Professor Keith Hill

## Member profile



### **Dr Marcelo Maghidman**

Dr Marcelo Maghidman is a lecturer at the Social Work Department, where he coordinates and teaches the unit Longevity and Social Work, and other units related to human development particularly involving simulations (OSCE) and counselling skills. His current research focuses on the biopsychosocial effects of formal volunteer activities in older adults. All the associations around volunteerism and cognitive reserve, ageing well, policies against ageism, are part of his interests for research, interdisciplinary collaborations and PhD co-supervision. Marcelo has 20 years' experience in private practice, working as a counsellor and consultant for individuals, families, organisations and governments, with special attention to older people, and 25 years of volunteer work in the aged care sector. His academic background is diverse: in Architecture (Ba), Philosophy (PhD Phi, MPhi, BPhi), Social Work (MSW) and Counselling (Dipl). Marcelo is also elected member of the executive board for the Australian Friends of Tel Aviv University.

## Member research - Dr Nikos Thomacos



### **The 50+ Study: Life, relationships, and retirement in contemporary Australia**

The 50+ Study is examining the lives, well-being, and relationships of people aged 50+ years of age living in the general community in Australia. Specifically, the study examines the effects of both supportive and unsupportive relationships, and how these relationships relate to stress, loneliness, and change. The impact of lifespan and retirement is being explicitly considered given the aging of the Australian population.

The significance of the proposed study's findings is that it will help us better understand the inter-relationships among aging, supportive relationships, retirement, and well-being. This knowledge will help to develop services that better address people's needs for support and to better train future health and social care workers and practitioners. The study will also avail detailed psychometric and theoretical examination of a range of instruments in regard to how they capture the lives of older people.

The overall purpose of the 50+ Study is to therefore extend previous research that has examined the connections among aging, wellbeing, and the stresses

and change inherent in getting older in contemporary Australia. Specifically, the study's three aims are as follows:

1. The primary aim of the proposed study is to examine the associations among age, the nature and dimensions of supportive relationships, retirement and change, and health and well-being.
2. The second aim is to relate examine individuals' perceptions of support and their experiences of loneliness, with emphasis on how these changes as people age.
3. The study will also avail detailed psychometric and theoretical examination of a range of instruments in regard to how they capture the lives of older people.

Participation in the study involves people completing a number of online surveys about their sources and use of support; their relationships with others; their lives; and, some questions about themselves; for example, their age, sex, etc. The surveys take approximately 20 - 25 minutes to complete, and to date over 150 people have chosen to participate.

Mediation and moderation analyses performed on these preliminary data suggest that both the positive and negative effects of supportive relationships are relevant to the transition and experience of retirement and to health and well-being outcomes. Currently, the temporal impact of pre to post retirement is being further examined. Concurrently, two follow up studies are being scoped with a view to them being in the field later this year. A second study that examines supportive relationships across the lifespan is also currently open. As data collection is being undertaken currently, we would appreciate you circulating the following link to your networks. The link takes potential participants to the study's introduction page that contains details of the study together with a link to the study's explanatory statement. The study's inclusion criteria are that participants need to be aged 50 or older, can complete the study surveys in English, and do so online.

To access the 50+ Study link please control + click: [50+ Study](#)

Please contact me should you have any questions of course

– [nikos.thomacos@monash.edu](mailto:nikos.thomacos@monash.edu)

## Grant success

### *External grants involving RAIL staff:*

#### **“Ageing with lifelong accident injuries: Building a body of evidence”**

RAIL has received funding from the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) for the project: “Ageing with lifelong accident injuries: Building a body of evidence”. The project aims to build the evidence base for the influence of ageing on health and well-being following transport accident injuries and service provision for older adults with acquired injuries.

With our ageing population, people are now older when they become injured, and injured people are also living longer. People living with acquired injury speak about the ‘double jeopardy’ of disability and ageing, whereby injury-related physical and mental health conditions are exacerbated by the impacts of ageing, and vice versa. These issues create downstream effects for injury insurers who are supporting people who are ageing with injury-related disability, as well as people with injury-related disability who are cared for by older adults. With a rapidly ageing population, these pressures on insurers are only expected to increase in the future.

The Monash University team is led by Dr Christina Ekegren (RAIL) with co-investigators from RAIL (Professor Keith Hill Assoc Professor Libby Callaway, Dr Aislinn Lalor and Dr Natasha Brusco), the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine (Professor Belinda Gabbe, Dr Ben Beck, Dr Sandy Braaf and Dr Melita Giummarra) and the Monash University Accident Research Centre (Associate Professor Sharon Newnam).

The new knowledge generated by this project will help to build the TAC’s capacity to care for injured older adults and younger adults as they age, ensuring the sustainability and responsiveness of the TAC Scheme and demonstrating the TAC’s status as a world class insurer for all claimants and clients, regardless of their age.

***Cross-faculty research initiative:***



PRACTIS (PRimary health and Aged Care Translation and Interpreting Services) project

The PRACTIS (PRimary health and Aged Care Translation and Interpreting Services) project aims to improve the delivery of care to older Australians with limited English proficiency living in residential aged care. PRACTIS is a cross Faculty (Arts and Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences) and multi School (Primary and Allied Health Care (SPAHC) and Public Health and Preventive Medicine (SPHPM)) initiative at Monash University.

The 2020 project team is co-led by Dr Joanne Enticott and Dr Jim Hlavac, with co-investigators team of Prof Terry Haines, Prof Keith Hill, A/Prof Ben Harris-Roxas (UNSW), Dr Katrina Long and Dr Chuan Yu. PRACTIS is working in partnership with key industry and government partners: the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing, Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, enliven, the Migrant and Refugee Health Partnership and the Commonwealth government Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National). This new arm of the PRACTIS studies has been funded through a Monash University Faculty of Arts/Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences NHS IDR Grants Scheme.

PRACTIS will become an exemplar project in the new National Centre for Healthy Ageing, which is an active collaboration between Monash University

and Peninsula Health and seeking to transform how care is provided to health and other support services to older adults. It will be situated in the RAIL (Rehabilitation, Ageing & Independent Living) Research Centre in the SPAHC. The project will produce real-world benefits for older Australians, staff within residential aged care facilities and care providers to residents, by addressing known under-utilisation of translating and interpreting services in mainstream, non-language specific aged care homes.

## Grant opportunities

### *Early to Mid-Career Researcher grants*

Initially we had planned to open the next round of Early to Mid Career Researcher grants at the start of April. Unfortunately, given the current situation this grant round will be delayed until a later date.

## Events



### **Residential aged care forum**

The Residential Aged Care Forum planned for the end of April has now been postponed. We hope to be able to reschedule the event as soon as practically possible.

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## Member forums



The next RAIL member forum is planned to be held in late April. We will communicate closer to this time as to whether this will proceed. If it proceeds, it is likely to be a zoom only event for attendees (but this will be confirmed in mid April).

## Upcoming conferences

Please note – we have checked as best as possible regarding updates on whether events in coming months are being cancelled or proceeding (as detailed below). Please check websites / conference organisers to confirm details of specific events.

- **(CANCELLED) May 7-9 2020**, Perth – The Australasian Society for the Study of Brain Impairment (ASSBI) 43rd Annual Brain Impairment Conference. Theme: Getting on with the business of living.  
<https://assbi.com.au/ASSBI-Conferences>
- **(POSTPONED TO Tuesday 13 October – Wednesday 14 Oct 2020)** - ATSA independent living expo <http://atsaindependentlivingexpo.com.au>  
Free exhibition
- May 12-13 2020, Melbourne - Biennial Universal Design Conference  
<http://universaldesignaustralia.net.au/australian-ud-conference-ud2020/>
- **(POSTPONED TO Wednesday 19 May - Friday, 21 May 2021 in Melbourne)** – The Australian and New Zealand Society of Geriatric Medicine Annual Scientific Meeting. Theme: Vision for the future. Abstract submission open (closes February 2020).  
<http://www.anzsgmconference.org/>
- **(POSTPONED – new date to be set)** Adelaide – The NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research (NNIDR) Australian Dementia

- Forum. Theme: Innovation, Discovery and Translation. Abstract submission open until Feb 14. <https://nnidr.eventsair.com/adf2020/>
- **(UNDER REVIEW) July 12 - 15, 2020.** Australian & New Zealand Association for Health Professional Educators (ANZAHPE) 2020 Conference, hosted in Melbourne, <https://www.anzahpe.org/2020-conference>
  - Nov 17-20, 2020. Australian Association of Gerontology conference – Hobart. Theme: A climate for change in Ageing. Abstract submission opens Feb 17, closes April 27. <http://2020.aagconference.aag.asn.au/>
  - Nov 29- 1 Dec 2020. Australian and New Zealand Falls Prevention Society conference – Auckland, NZ. Theme: Live stronger for longer. Abstract submission opens Feb 27, abstract submissions close May 29. <http://anzfpconference2020.co.nz/>
  - Latest NDIS-hosted events for Scheme participants, families and/or providers. See <https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/events>

If you are aware of any other conferences that may be relevant to members of RAIL, please forward details (if possible, before the timing of closure of abstract submissions).

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu)

