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HDA membership is open to researchers, PhD students and professionals working in areas relevant to HDA's research. We also encourage the community who are interested in HDA and what we do to join and support us.

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HDA RESEARCH MEMBER PROFILE - JODIE SCOTT SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE



I am currently undertaking a PhD in the School of Psychology at the University of Adelaide, under the supervision of Professor Deborah Turnbull (School of Psychology), Professor Jodie Dodd (School of Paediatrics and Reproductive Health), Associate Professor Claudia Szabo (School of Computer Science) and Dr Melissa Oxlad (School of Psychology).

My research interests lie in maternal and child health, and psychological approaches to behaviour change. This PhD research explores the development of an eHealth intervention for women above the healthy weight range intending pregnancy, with a focus on behaviour change to manage their weight and adopt a healthy lifestyle. With half of women beginning a pregnancy overweight or obese, the intent is to help women lose weight before they conceive, to lower the risk of pregnancy complications and improve the lifelong health of the baby by reducing the burden of intergenerational obesity.

Few studies or interventions exist that target this important pre-conception phase and I'm especially interested in the link between genes, environment and individual autonomy. The project is based on the Information-Motivation-Behavioural Skills (IMB) model, with the initial study aiming to understand women's emotional and social contexts, knowledge, motivations and barriers to making healthy change. An intervention planning protocol will be followed, with the individual determinants of behaviour mapped onto suitable intervention techniques.

The intervention program will be based on psychological theories and behaviour change techniques to change women's thinking around their health behaviours and assist in overcoming barriers to a healthier lifestyle. It will likely integrate several psychological techniques, including aspects of CBT, ACT and mindfulness strategies – currently lacking in many healthy lifestyle interventions. The project takes an interdisciplinary approach, with a committed and diverse supervision team split across health psychology, clinical psychology, obstetrics and computer science. Research participants will take an active part in guiding the development process, by allowing them to engage with prototypes and offer feedback. Various methods for delivering the eHealth intervention will be tested for engagement and feasibility.

In the last few years, I have transitioned from a career working in strategic and creative design, prompted by a personal interest in the area of psychology and, after the birth of identical twins, epigenetics and the influence of the gestational environment. This project represents a merging of skills that, hopefully, will enable me to approach the intervention in a unique manner.

✉ jodie.scott@adelaide.edu.au

2019 Australian Youth Representative Consultation Report

In 2019, The Australian Youth Representative to the UN, Kareem El- Ansary, and his team conducted the nation's largest face-to-face consultation of young Australians. The objective was to identify and better understand the issues that are of most concern to young people across the country.

Over a 7-month period, Kareem travelled over 100,000km, visited 56 towns and cities in every state and territory and met thousands of young people from every corner of Australia.

From our urban hearts to our remote communities and everywhere in between, young Australians made their voices heard.

This report is the product of thousands of conversations with those young people. In it, you will find stories, case studies, photos and artworks from 233 consultations across the country.

TO READ THE 2019 YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE CONSULTATION REPORT go to <https://unyouth.org.au/event/youthrep/>

NEW HDA RESEARCH MEMBERS

Dr Thuong Ha

Centre for Cancer Biology, UniSA
Focus - molecular genetics, stillbirth

Ms Ellen Davies

School of Nursing, University of Adelaide
Focus - mental health, needs assessment

Mrs Samantha Watson

School of Pharmacy & Medical Sciences, UniSA
Focus - cancer immunology & therapeutics

Ms Emily Aldridge

Adelaide Medical School, University of Adelaide
Focus - pregnancy complications, obstetrics

Ms Sarah Seekamp

School of Health Sciences, UniSA
Focus - child protection/prevention

A/Prof Jaklin Elliott

School of Public Health, University of Adelaide
Focus - health care decision making

Mrs Lynne Loh

College of Nursing & Health Science, Flinders University
Focus - vision impairment in children

Dr Lisa Nicholas

Robinson Research Institute, University of Adelaide
Focus - pancreatic islet biology, maternal obesity

Ms Amelia Winter

School of Psychology, University of Adelaide
Focus - refugee/migrant health, infant mental health

Miss Kristy Davis

School of Education, University of Adelaide
Focus - education research

Child Development Council

First Data and Technical Report for South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People

The Data and Technical Report provides the detailed technical specifications for measures in South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People.

The report captures the latest available data from a variety of state, national and international sources, to monitor, track and report the outcomes of children and young people, birth to 18 years, in five dimensions: health, safety, wellbeing, education and citizenship.

<https://childrensa.sa.gov.au/outcomes-framework-data-technical-report/>

The voice of experience; the young people asking for change in SA's Youth Justice system

Young people aged 14 – 21 years, all with a lived experience of South Australia's youth justice system, have recommended eight key changes to significantly improve the system from their point of view.

The recommendations form part of ***Making Change in Youth Justice – A User's Guide to building a better South Australian youth justice system***, launched by South Australia's Commissioner for Children and Young People, Helen Connolly.

The young people's recommendations include addressing cell hygiene, reducing court waiting times, supplying easy to understand information about the people and procedures young people will face, and arrangement of the courtroom to be less intimidating. They say implementing these changes would go a long way to achieving better outcomes for young people in the State's youth justice system.

They also said unrealistic bail conditions that set them up to fail and fines being issued to young people with no source of income were key areas of concern. These need to be seriously re-examined by those with the power to make positive change, as a part of an improvement plan for youth justice.

To download the user guide go to <https://www.ccyp.com.au/>

DESIGNING A CITY WITHOUT CARS - FOR THE SAKE OF THE KIDS

Media Release - 3 March, UniSA



More than half of Australian households own two or more motor vehicles, while only seven per cent own none – we are, without a doubt, a car country.

However, while countless advertisements celebrate the freedom cars provide, University of South Australia urban planning researcher, Hulya Gilbert, says there are growing reasons to question the cost of that freedom, and even challenge whether it is freedom at all.

“There’s obviously the environmental impacts, and the health and fitness consequences of using cars, but there’s also a huge social impact,” Gilbert says.

“Despite the common view across the world that cars provide freedom and flexibility, increasingly we’re seeing the priority given to cars is infringing people’s ability – and right – to get around without one. That’s especially true of children, and the more we build our cities around cars, the more we rob kids and teenagers of opportunities to enjoy some independence and develop self-reliance.”

Gilbert’s research shows the assumption that most people travel by car dominates current transport discussions, which, in turn, has dictated the design and location of key places in children’s lives, such as schools and sporting clubs.

Once our cities are built that way, she says, it’s

hard to move outside the plan.

“It’s not enough just to say, ‘kids need to walk to school more,’” Gilbert says. “In many situations, we have planned that possibility out of cities, and now it’s just not safe or practical for children to ride or walk to the places they need to go – so much so, that there are now perceptions that parents who do let their kids ride or walk are being negligent.”

Gilbert says a change in priorities by urban planners is needed to reverse this trend, and despite a growing interest in alternatives to the private car across the world, her research suggests we’re unlikely to see large scale shifts in travel behaviour unless we make the required changes to infrastructure first.

“That involves building and maintaining safe walking and cycling paths and associated infrastructure including green spaces, trees and pedestrian crossings, and reducing speed limits and traffic flow around those areas to ensure they’re safe. It also means ensuring public transport is connected to those active transport networks, and that key locations, such as schools and sports clubs, are located so they’re accessible by those modes.”

Developing these networks will not only benefit children and teenagers, Gilbert says, but also help other social groups currently disadvantaged by being unable to drive, including the elderly, vision impaired and lower income earners.

“At the moment, our cities and societies are set up based on the idea that having a licence and owning a car is the norm, and we often consider the lack of car ownership as a disadvantage. Our right to move around our cities without a car is not commonly considered. Now, even though it’s the case that most people have access to a car and travel by car in cities such as Adelaide, planning and thinking as if they don’t would open up many possibilities and opportunities which would accelerate progress towards less private car usage and the associated, wide-ranging benefits,” Gilbert says.

Coronavirus: tiny moments of pleasure really can help us through this stressful time

The Conversation
27 March

If I told you that last night I built a blanket fort in the living room, crawled inside with my cat, a glass of wine and my just-arrived copy of the New Yorker, would you think less of me? After all, we’re in the midst of a global coronavirus pandemic. Borders are closing, people are sick, dying, losing their jobs, and locked in isolation. And there was I, playing – as though I didn’t have a care in the world.

Read more at <https://theconversation.com>

KIDS NEED CALM NOT CHAOS AMID COVID-19

Media Release - 24 March, UniSA



Elbow bumps in lieu of high-fives, segregated lunchtimes and hyper hand hygiene — they're all a part of our children's new reality in response to Covid-19. But while kids are seemingly adapting well to the changes, University of South Australia child development experts say adults need to be increasingly mindful of their own reactions to the pandemic and take care when explaining the situation to children.

According to early childhood education expert, UniSA's Associate Professor Victoria Whittington, the way a parent, teacher, or significant adult responds in a crisis can have significant implications for a child.

"Children need calm and stable parents and teachers, especially in uncertain times. There's no doubt, we're all feeling a bit unsure at the moment, but panicking and worrying in front of your kids will not improve the situation," A/Prof Whittington says.

"Children take cues from their key attachment figures — their mums, dads, and teachers — so if they hear or see them worrying, they'll tend to take on this worry too.

"That's not to say that parents should avoid talking about the current health problem, rather, parents need to be mindful of how they broach the subject. Talking calmly, kindly and patiently with children will help them learn what they need to know in a considered way, without extra angst.

"Parents should also know that it's okay to keep the information light and age-appropriate. For younger children, songs, games and jokes can work well to teach and remind them of what they can do to stay safe. Similarly, for older children, sitting together to watch an explainer video can also work.

"Also, appropriate to age, parents can talk with their children about the ways that they can work together to support each other, as children want to contribute. Having a sense of agency is important to children as well as adults.

"For example, families could talk together about what they might do as a family to support each other, so that children are team members, things such as working out fun activities for their families to do at home, contributing to house cleaning, or reminding the family about handwashing and social distancing when shopping."

Recently, children have been exposed to an unusual amount disruptive changes — chaotic and irrational buying that's stripped supermarkets of toilet paper, new social distancing measures, and constant reports of illness and death on TV. Add this to the cancellation of or changes at school, mum and dad working from home or not going to work at all, and children are understandably unsettled.

Educational psychology and child protection expert, UniSA's Dr Lesley-anne Ey, says as the pandemic develops, parents will increasingly be looking for ways to rationalise the state of play to their kids.

"Young children in particular are unlikely to be able to understand what's going on and how it will affect them, their family and their friends," Dr Ey says.

"They may be concerned that their loved ones are going to die; that Australia will run out of food; or that they'll not see their friends again. The need for protective practices is very real. But when explaining to kids the importance of more frequent handwashing, avoiding handshakes or high-fives, and not touching their face after touching things in public, parents should be clear that these steps are preventative not doomed steps.

"For parents, the most important thing is to maintain a sense of calm around your kids. Shield them from too much sensationalist TV news but be honest about what's happening in the world.

"No matter how old they are, all children still need hugs and affection from their parents. Together, these are the keys to making your child feel safe, loved and secure."

VEGKIT FOR AUSSIE KIDS

Media Release - 10 March, Flinders University



Flinders University nutrition experts have contributed to a newly launched online registry of resources that aims to help boost vegetable consumption in Aussie kids. The searchable website features projects, programs and research that can be used by health professionals, organisations and agencies in their own settings to support children's veggie intake.

The registry is one of the first achievements of five-year VegKit project which brings together a large program of work to address the significant issue of underconsumption of vegetables in children.

The overall \$4 million VegKit project is funded by Hort Innovation and led by the CSIRO in a consortium with Flinders University and Nutrition Australia. It's estimated that 95% of Australian children aged between two and six years are not eating adequate amounts of vegetables.

Nutrition Australia, which led the development of the online vegetable resource registry component, says project was designed as an easy-to-use, approachable and credible source of inspiration. CEO Lucinda Hancock says the online resource registry aims to increase vegetable consumption in children by supporting those who work with children to implement projects and initiatives or upload their own work for others to see.

"Working together with community and public health workers, educators, organisations and re-

searchers means we can expand impact of VegKit and improve the likelihood of addressing the issue," she says.

"The overall goal of the registry is to increase reach of contributors' work and motivate others in the child and public health settings to use the resources to put into place their own projects to improve vegetable consumption of children. It is only with the collaboration of a range of individuals that we can combat this growing issue."

The team at Flinders University led the development of the Global Rating Assessment Tool which enables all submitted resources to be reviewed for effectiveness and alignment the Best Practice Guidelines for Increasing Vegetable Consumption in Children.

Flinders University Caring Futures Institute researcher Professor Rebecca Golley, a nationally recognised expert in childhood obesity and nutrition promotion, said the assessment tool was just one aspect of the Institute's input into VegKit.

"Flinders is also working with international experts as well as health, child development and education professionals to look for opportunities to foster a liking and acceptance of vegetables right from when children start to eat," she says.

"We are also working with industry partners to explore novel food service models to overcome common barriers to supporting kids to eat plenty of vegetables in childcare. Ultimately this trusted and reviewed wealth of knowledge provides a suite of practical tools, programs and initiatives for educators and health care professionals to promote veggie consumption in key settings such as long day care centres and schools. We need to make eating vegetables a greater focus for Aussie kids by making veggies available and the easy choice across the day," Associate Professor Golley says.

Research institutions, community, public health and not-for-profit organisations, and early and primary education providers are encouraged to upload their own vegetable consumption initiatives to the registry.

For further info go to <https://www.vegkit.com.au/registry>

Kids shouldn't have to repeat a year of school because of coronavirus. There are much better options

The Conversation
27 March

Australian schools and teachers are preparing to shift classes online – some independent schools already have. Remote learning is likely to be the norm in the second term and possibly longer. Even if done well, there are still likely to be learning losses.

Read more at <https://theconversation.com>

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If you are unsure as to whether you align with HDA research, please contact anne.jurisevic@adelaide.edu.au prior to joining.

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