



G-TRAC News

Director Update



Professor Renuka Visvanathan

The year has really flown past. Perhaps, this is because the team has been really busy. In this newsletter, we highlight teaching, research and clinical activities. This year, we have piloted a new program with Prince Alfred College where we host senior students who are aspiring to enter medical school training and have been selected by their school to participate in our workplace experience program. G-TRAC continues with seminars and this year, with the CRE, a research showcase event is planned in the month of September where some of our researchers will present their work to the community. The team continues to grow and we welcome

Dr Danielle Taylor, a health geographer who was awarded the Hospital Research Foundation mid career fellowship.

Inaugural G-TRAC Research Writing Workshop- 24 March 2017

Research students and fellows of the G-TRAC Centre got together with Prof Wilson and Prof Visvanathan to hone their research writing skills. This activity allows the researchers to share their preliminary work and obtain feedback.



Photo L-R- Dr Beatriz Martins, Dr Sally Suriani, Dr Kareeann Khaw, James Symth, Agathe Daria Jadczyk, Prof Renuka Visvanathan, Mark Thompson, Dr Kandiah Umaphysivam, Dr Neha Mahajan, Dr Tommy Tucker, Prof David Wilson, Dr Ivanka Hendrix

Educating Medical Students in Counselling Older Adults About Exercise

Exercise courses during medical school contribute to medical students' confidence in promoting physical activity to their patients. However, there is still a lack of uniform physical activity education across school curricula to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to counsel their patients about exercise.

We conducted a study which aimed to determine the effects of an exercise tutorial combined with a practical exercise counselling session on students' perceptions of the importance of exercise and their perceived competence in advising older people about exercise.

We used a validated questionnaire that was administered to the students before and after their Geriatric Medicine Course in 2015 and 2016.

The results indicated that a 1.5-hr physical activity module improves senior medical students' perceived competence in counselling older people about exercise. This research proves that little teaching space is needed to impact positively on medical students' exercise counselling abilities.

Prince Alfred College (PAC) Work Experience Students- Kevin Ho & Jason Charlwood

The G-TRAC Medical Placement Program has provided us, as high school students, an opportunity to explore and deepen our understanding into the Geriatric branch of medicine. Our experiences at the G-TRAC Centre, the Basil Hetzel Institute and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital were all extremely informative learning experiences and made us realise how vast and complex the field of medicine really is.

Spending our first few days at the G-TRAC Centre in the Resthaven Nursing Home allowed us to meet some of elderly patients staying there and introduced us to the environment of geriatrics. Not only were we able to grasp an understanding of the environment of geriatrics, we also sat in on the medical students' lectures, allowing us to learn about the large variety of frailties people may face as they age.

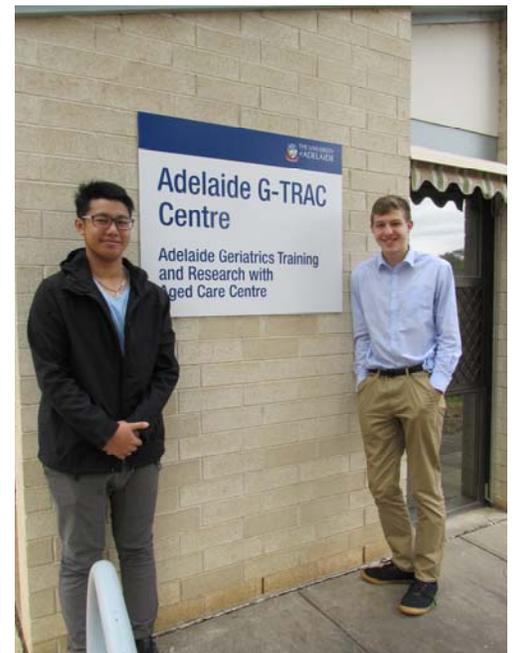
Following the lectures, we were fortunate enough to tour the Basil Hetzel Institute, which provided us with an opportunity to learn about the fundamentals of health and medical research. This gave us an insight into the amazing research that is occurring in the field of geriatric medicine and the various aspects of work that have been completed.

Shadowing the doctors during ward rounds was exciting as we were able to observe the inner workings of the hospital and how medical staff operate on their busy schedules. The variety of conditions that doctors have to treat were extensive and the condition of frailty was noticeable within almost every single patient. It was amazing to see the hard work and dedication the medical staff had for their patients and it was wonderful to observe them in action.

Overall, the G-TRAC Medical Placement program was very educational and informative. This experience has provided us with some valuable insights into the role of a doctor and taught us about the huge range of skills required at the very outset of a medical career as well as the considerable time pressures and the need for careful prioritisation of tasks. We thoroughly enjoyed our work placement program and would like to thank our College and Professor Renuka Visvanathan and her medical team for the opportunity to participate in this program.



PAC work experience students Kevin Ho and Jason Charlwood



Kevin Ho and Jason Charlwood

Out with falls– using technology to detect patient movement in hospital!

Falls are a significant issue for older people. Falls can rob older people of their independence and quality of life, as well as causing injury and even death. Falls in hospitals are more common for older people and people with cognitive impairment. Much is done in hospital to prevent falls but even with current best practice, falls rates remain unacceptably high. Something more is required, especially when patients are unsupervised.

A novel approach to prevent falls in hospital has been developed - using technology to detect movements. This intervention is called Ambient Intelligent Geriatric Management (AmbIGeM) system. It involves patients wearing a small lightweight Bluetooth sensor in a singlet worn under their gown or clothes. The sensor detects movement of patients who, on their own, are moving in a way that might result in a fall, and alerts nurses to immediately check on the patient. Staff may then provide supervision to the patient and potentially prevent a fall. This approach will complement not replace, current falls prevention practice.

AmbIGeM is currently being tested in a clinical trial in three wards in The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. This trial commenced in July and will continue until June 2019. The aim of the AmbIGeM trial is to prevent falls and injuries from falls. If wearing the sensor reduces the number of patients falling, then this has the potential to have a large impact on the health of older people.



Dr Joanne Dollard with patients at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Members of our G-TRAC team are leading this research. This trial has been funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia.

Welcome Dr Danielle Taylor

Dr Danielle Taylor successfully obtained a 3 year Mid Career Fellowship from The Hospital Research Foundation. This will allow her to study “Inequalities in Neighbourhood Accessibility: Implications for Frailty and Healthy Ageing” from July 2017 - June 30 2020.



Dr Danielle Taylor

Dr Danielle Taylor will be funded for three years to conduct research that will ensure people in our community can live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives. Dr Taylor is part of the CRE Frailty and Healthy Ageing research group and her research complements research work being undertaken as part of the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Frailty and Healthy Ageing.

This research will aim to understand the influence of environmental factors, as enablers or barriers to healthy ageing. It will have a particular focus on the role geographic access and locational disadvantage plays in facilitating or impeding high functional ability. It will also develop an enhanced area level frailty risk index, incorporating geographic demographic information and accessibility measures of relevance to frailty. This can be used as a planning tool for the equitable and effective provision of health services.

Breathing Away Anxiety– 8 June 2017

On Thursday the 8th of June a special consumer seminar on understanding anxiety and mindfulness was held here at G-TRAC. We had Dr Cheryl Lee from the Rural and Remote Older Persons Mental Health Service present an overview of anxiety disorder in the older population. We then had a short break for some coffee and cake, and then Himani Bhatia gave an overview on mindfulness then took the participants through a mindfulness practice. The session was ended with a panel question and answer session where the participants enjoyed asking the presenters some further questions. Feedback from the session was that the participants enjoyed that the session reinforced past learnings and reinforcing awareness and they were looking forward to discussing what they had learnt further with their friends.

Here are some self help tips for anxiety from our panel:

Ways to reduce the risk of developing Anxiety:

- Living well (exercise, diet, social activity)
- Keeping engaged and connected
- Finding satisfaction and fulfilment
- Meditation and relaxation
- Being mindful of stressful life changes
- Remember to be kind



Dr Cheryl Lee, Dr Neha Mahajan, Himani Bhatia



Dr Cheryl Lee



Himani Bhatia

Geriatricians at G-TRAC

Geriatricians are specialist physicians who work with older people and are trained to recognise and treat health conditions common to older people such as dementia, movement disorders, falls, frailty and polypharmacy (too many medications). Geriatricians deal with complexities and cherish the opportunity to help older people achieve a better quality of life as well as physical function.

Geriatricians practice the skills of comprehensive geriatric assessment and management whereby when treating a patient, they take into account not only the medical needs of the patients but also the contributions of psychological, social, physical and environmental factors. Geriatricians aim to work with the patient, their family and other treating clinicians (the multi-disciplinary team) to achieve what is best for the patient. Geriatricians work in and out of hospitals. Geriatricians are also interested in teaching, research, policy and advocate strongly. At G-TRAC, we see our medical student and specialist registrar program as essential in ensuring that the future medical workforce is better equipped to meet the health care needs of our ageing population.

At Paradise, our regular geriatricians are A/Prof Solomon Yu and Dr Kareeann Khow. They work closely with our G-TRAC Clinical nurse and advanced trainee in geriatric medicine. A referral is required from the treating general practitioner for geriatrician assessment and management either at the G-TRAC Clinic or in the residential aged care facility.



Dr Solomon Yu



Dr Kareeann Khow

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