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## Minister and Chief of Army visit CMVH

The interest and willingness to engage with CMVH has certainly accelerated since the **CMVH Board Dinner at the Australian War Memorial** in March. A high spot was reached in May when CMVH was honoured to receive a visit from both the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and The Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence - The Honourable **Bruce Billson MP** and the Chief of Army - **LTGEN Peter Leahy AO**.

Both gentlemen paid considerable attention to briefings on CMVH projects and progress as well as providing informed feedback and guidance to CMVH on DVA and Defence (Army) priorities. The visits weren't all work either and once again both gentlemen took the time to mingle and chat with CMVH staff over respective morning and afternoon teas (*see photos*).



## Student Numbers Increase

**Active enrolments across the graduate certificate, diploma and masters in Public Health (Defence) have reached 12 for semester one this year. Current indications are that this figure could be up by almost fifty percent for semester two thanks to some good communications efforts by the staff at CMVH and its associates.**

This figure will hopefully continue to grow with the road show still to visit Adelaide, the Northern Territory and parts of South East Queensland. Further to this strong recruiting the MPH (Defence) looks set to welcome its first international student from our friends and close allies, New Zealand.

There is a ground swell of interest in the upcoming short course, Health Aspects of Disasters (PUBH7117). This will be offered in November over a six day period. This course covers the common types of disasters and effects on health, nutrition and mortality; public health and medical responses; infectious disease and nutritional emergencies; refugee camps; co-ordination of Donor and Aid agencies; disaster

preparedness and minimization of health hazards. Once again, the Environmental and Occupational Health (7113HO) course offered through UA is well subscribed with the short course offered from 14 - 29 August. This is open to enrolment through PMKeys. Other innovations to watch out for include an expanded offering for the MPH in relation to skin cancer medicine and ongoing tertiary recognition for courses undertaken whilst in Defence.

Should you have any questions in relation to any of these points or in relation to any professional development opportunities through CMVH please don't hesitate to contact **Major Nick Duff (nick.duff@uq.edu.au (07) 3346 4860 / 0412 158 515)**.

## Health programs

The Deployment Health Surveillance Unit (DHSU) will be studying potential health issues related to Defence personnel on deployments such as recent operations in the Solomon Islands.

**This initiative has come from a desire to better understand the long-term health of ADF personnel who have deployed on overseas operations. This phase is the first step in what is anticipated to be a long-term follow-up of the health of Defence personnel.**

The first study undertaken by DHSU considered Australia's involvement in Timor as InterFET (International Force East Timor). Work has continued on this pilot study, analysis of Defence owned health data and mortality data is nearing completion. The value of this project has been that the techniques, methodology and plans developed can be easily modified for analysis of other deployments.

Much of the focus of the past three months has been the development of detailed plans for the Solomon Islands, Bougainville and East Timor projects. This phase is nearing completion with all the basic components completed and also approved for implementation.

In the last month members of the DHSU research team have met with scientists from Entox (the National Research Centre for Environmental Toxicology at the University of Queensland) to discuss the feasibility of environmental testing particularly for the Bougainville project. This project will address potential exposure to environmental hazards and contaminants.

The Research Team has also met with researchers from the Army Malaria Institute to explore the potential for using data from the Central Malaria Registry to identify incidence of malaria related to deployments.



## Director's message



**Now that Alison Mackenzie has arrived as Senior Research Assistant, the CMVH Director's Research Initiative is underway. We are developing four new**

**programs for CMVH.**

### Occupational health and safety (OHS)

Steve Grzeskowiak, Director General at the new Centre for Occupational Health in Defence, is interested in development of a research strategy to complement Defence's OHS strategic plan. It was agreed that CMVH would develop ideas for discussion and a capability statement. The key aim is the need to put the H back into OHS. Issues noted in various discussions have included hazardous substances, aviation fuel and solvents, injuries, mental health and applying risk management to the design and commissioning stages of projects.

### Health workforce innovation

The Director's Research Initiative is involved in a number of pilots or pioneer projects in which health services are being re-designed using health professionals in extended roles, or creating new roles for different types of health workers. We are in discussions with Queensland Health (QH) on a significant program, which will be done in partnership with James Cook University (JCU). As well we are submitting an expression of interest to the NHMRC Health Services Research

Program on behalf of a consortium comprising UQ, JCU, Charles Darwin University (CDU), QH, and NT Health. We hope to involve military medics in both of these pilot/pioneer programs. In the future it seems likely that training and education of health professionals will change significantly. There will be a much wider variety of health practitioners and support workers, working in broader teams. Undergraduate education is likely to be streamlined. There will be greater emphasis on the acquisition of skills as needed, through more flexible, competency-based learning programs. Our health workforce innovation program will ensure CMVH is at the forefront of training and education design.

### Qualitative research in public health

With Dr Jon Adams, an epidemiologist from the School of Population Health (SPH) at UQ, we have agreed to look at establishing a qualitative research unit jointly across SPH and CMVH. An exploratory meeting has been held with representatives from UQ, UA and CDU.

### Disaster management

A fourth major new initiative underway at CMVH is training for health practitioners in disaster management. A new short course in health aspects of disaster management is due for its inaugural delivery in November this year. Demonstrating the potential value of our consortium, this work provided a basis for a response to a Commonwealth tender for training in this area. A national program was proposed to be delivered from Brisbane, Adelaide and Darwin.



# e-Health team attends American Telemedicine Association conference - and sees the Padres whip the Cubs!

The CMVH e-Health team attended the 2006 ATA conference during May.

The ATA proved to be an excellent networking opportunity and gave the e-health team direct access to:

- Special Interest Groups - telemental health, disaster, home telehealth, human factors, international, emergency preparedness / response, ocular telehealth, technology, teledermatology, telenursing, telepathology and telerehabilitation.
- TATRC - Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Centre
- A total of 225 presentations (up to 7 concurrent) and 95 posters.
- A vendor exhibit of around 150 vendors - including robotic surgical systems and more.
- Representatives from North and South America, UK, Italy, Germany, France, Norway, South Africa, New Zealand, other.

- Presentations described provider centricity - with some reporting need to consider cultural and other sensitivities.
- Standards and systems development - including interoperability - are key items on the international agenda.
- SIGs are each working towards relevant goals that are too numerous to list in this article.

The CMVH e-Health team is now firming links with the substantial network generated through the ATA and will be presenting specific information to key stakeholders in the coming months.



Pictured (left to right) **Phil Johnson** (CMVH and COH), **Professor Richard Wootton** (Director, Centre for Online Health (COH), University of Queensland), **LCDR Bob Curtis RAN**, **LCDR John Ashley RAN**, **LCDR Steve Pullman** (RAN - currently posted to Washington DC) and **Professor K (Yogi) Yogesan** (Director, Centre of Excellence in e-Medicine, Lions Eye Institute, Nedlands Western Australia).

Key messages emerging from the ATA:

- "Triple Helix" - the essential partnership between academia, providers and funders.

## Think Tank's ethical dilemma

**"Towards a Framework for Military Health Ethics" is the theme for the upcoming CVMH Think Tank**

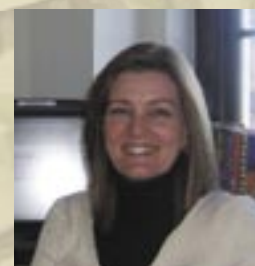
April 4th 2006 the saw the conduct of the Military Health Ethics Think Tank Workshop at CMVH. The Workshop was attended by the Steering Committee which consists of diverse range of Defence Health and Operational personnel and ethicists. The purpose of the Workshop was to identify and define the professional ethical issues from the experiential and personal paradigms of the participating

Medical including Psychiatric and Dental, Nursing, Legal, Spiritual, Bioethical, DVA and Command representatives.

An Issues Paper examining possible health related ethical issues arising from military operations developed as a result of the Workshop will be widely disseminated within the Senior Defence community for comment prior to the Think Tank activity.

The Think Tank entitled "Towards a Framework for Military Health Ethics" will be conducted in the second half of

the year at Customs House, Brisbane. Participants for the Think Tank activity will include Commanders and senior Medical and other health personnel from Army, Navy and Air Force with operational experience, Defence legal representatives able to provide applicable perspectives on the rules of engagement and representatives from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Non Government Organisations involved in humanitarian assistance operations and Ex Service Organizations who can provide insights from the past.



Some of the Steering Committee representatives (from the left) are **Dr Graeme Killer** (DVA), **Assoc Prof Mal Parker** (UQ medical ethicist), **LTCOL David Collins** (Defence Health), **LTCOL Chris Field** (Defence Combat Arms) and **Tracy Carthew** (CMVH Think Tank project coordinator).

# Research Comms

In late March Prof Niki Ellis, A/Prof Scott Kitchener and A/Prof Cate D'Este attended the Asia Pacific Military Medicine Conference in New Delhi.

Prof Ellis presented a poster emphasizing the future of workforce innovation for health services as one of the Director's research initiatives. A/Prof Kitchener described the Australian Deployment Health Surveillance Program with an overview of the program methodology highlighted by the conduct of the InterFET pilot.

CMDR Sonya Bennett presented the findings of the project Research into Veteran Quality of Life at the DVA Western Australia State Office Research Seminar on 6 April.

This project, won by competitive tender and performed in partnership with the UQ School of Population Health and Australasian Centre on Ageing, was completed in July 05. Other speakers at the Seminar included Maurie O'Connor, the Acting Director of the Mental Health Policy Section (DVA), and Des Parry, The National Coordinator of WVCS, who was invited to visit CMVH UQ in the near future to discuss potential research opportunities with the newly established Qualitative Research Unit.

## Adelaide update

There will be an Aeromedical Evacuation Workshop held in Adelaide at the National Wine Centre 20-22 November 06. It will bring together experts in the field from the military, civilian and overseas realms to discuss improved systems for cooperation in mass casualty disasters. This will provide a unique opportunity for review and development of procedures in Australia. The Adelaide node of CMVH is tendering for a series of research projects. These include: On the Job training in Bio-security and Disaster response, Neurological Blast Trauma, Lead studies, long term effects of treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and a follow up related to

health of Gulf War Veterans.

There are many opportunities for Post Graduate studies through the Adelaide node. In particular, The University of Adelaide offers a wide range of courses in postgraduate Nursing studies suitable for both distance learning and residential modes of study. The Intensive Occupational and Environmental Health Course will be run again this August at RAAF Edinburgh. An on-line version of this course is also available. Many opportunities are available for students wishing to further their professional development by undertaking higher postgraduate studies within a Ph D program.

## Darwin update



**Prof Jonathan Carapetis has now taken up his position as the new Director of the Menzies School of Health Research.**

Professor Carapetis was previously the Director of the

Centre for International Child Health, University of Melbourne Department of Paediatrics. He was a consultant in paediatric infectious diseases at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne. He trained in paediatrics in Melbourne, undertook doctoral studies in Darwin and furthered his paediatric infectious

diseases training at the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto. His major research interests are in group A streptococcal diseases, particularly the public health and clinical aspects of rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease. His research into group A streptococcal disease in the Aboriginal population translated into important public health interventions, including the establishment of Australia's first rheumatic heart disease control program in the Top End.

CMVH extends thanks to Ms Louise Clark, Acting Deputy Director, who has been the Head of the Darwin node since November 2005.

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