



THE UNIVERSITY  
of ADELAIDE

Spring 2015

# G-TRAC News

## G-TRAC Centre Update



Prof Alastair Burt G-TRAC Chair & Prof Renuka Visvanathan

We are excited to announce that we were part of a successful National Health and Medical Research Council Centre of Research Excellence application: *Trans-Disciplinary Frailty Research to Achieve Healthy Ageing*.

This was a partnership application with colleagues from general practice, nursing,

orthopaedics, pharmacy, rehabilitation medicine, allied health, health economics and geography. This grant allows us to partner with other research centres across the country and in fact the world. As a direct result of this grant, clinical and research capacity will grow over the next 5 years as we train the next generation of clinician and research experts. We hope that this will then translate into better quality care for older Australians as the result of new interventions to prevention the negative consequences of frailty. It is because of the support from many that we have achieved this.

I would like to especially thank our Consumer Advisors who have worked hard to make the G-TRAC initiatives a success in 2015. The wise counsel of the G-TRAC Advisory Group cannot be underestimated. Our programs have benefited tremendously from the ongoing enthusiastic support from many collaborating organisations. Our staff and clinical titleholders continue to go that extra mile to make our training and research programs successful.

We will be holding the 2015 G-TRAC Research Showcase on the 4th of December and look forward to welcoming researchers, partners and consumers to this event.



[Health.adelaide.edu.au/medicine/g-trac](http://Health.adelaide.edu.au/medicine/g-trac)

## Healthy Ageing Seminar Series

As part of the ongoing G-TRAC Healthy Ageing Seminar Series 25 seminars, workshops and events attended by over 1500 people have been held since the centre opened in 2013. In 2015 five major seminars and workshops on Healthy Ageing and Mobility, End of Life Care and Challenging Racism, Teaching on The Run, Cultural Diversity and Engaging Ageing and a Wellness, Reablement and Resilience Symposium were held in collaboration with a range of partner organisations. These events have been very well received and supported by the sector and have been a major part of the centre's aim to increase the capacity, skills and knowledge of the health and aged care sector.

## Cultural Diversity Engaging in Ageing



Cathy Zsers, Joe Caputo, Rosie Bonnin, Dr Helen Feist, Cathy Chong, Vikram Madan, Jeanette Walters, Cathy Chong

The G-TRAC Centre in collaboration with Active Ageing, the Australian Association of Gerontology, Multicultural Aged Care SA, SA Aged Care Collaboratives,

Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils, Multicultural Communities Council SA and the

Office for the Ageing held the "*Cultural Diversity Engaging in Ageing*" key aged care event.

The day aimed to bring together communities to celebrate the ideals of cultural diversity. The event was opened by Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells who congratulated the organisers and outlined the importance of cultural diversity in the community and to the Governments current My Aged Care reforms. It is estimated that with our ageing population 1 in 4 older Australians will be from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

Our keynote speaker was Dr Helen Feist, University of Adelaide, speaking on Cultural Diversity and Ageing Well. The event featured lively activities and exciting tabletop presentations which highlighted innovative programs across SA.

## G-TRAC Teaching Program



Dr Jeanine Teo with G-TRAC students

Adelaide G-TRAC Centre student program has welcomed over 200 students this year and we have had a very successful year introducing new activities and opportunities for students.

We have been evaluating and improving our program each year since the centre opened.

The Clinical educators have been involved in undertaking a study to determine the impact of undertaking a placement at G-TRAC on medical students' understanding of, and attitudes towards, aged care. Data has been collected from students via both a pre and post placement questionnaire.

Most recently, we have examined in more detail the impact of our placement on students undertaking a 'Chronic Disease and Community Care' elective. This elective has a focus on positive and healthy ageing and we were interested to find out whether students understanding of aged care, as well as their attitudes towards aged care had improved after having completed the 3 week placement. We looked at data collected during the 2014 academic year with thirty 4th and 5th year medical students involved.

Results from our study have shown that there was a statistically significant increase in students understanding of aged care from commencement to completion of the placement. There was a statistically significant increase in student interest in working in aged care as a future career path. On completion of their placement 100% of students agreed that their attitude towards ageing and working with older people had improved.

Students also had the opportunity to provide feedback via free-text as to what they felt were some of the best aspects of their placement. Students wrote "Personally, in my previous rotations, my encounters with older people had been mostly negative with unhappy sick patients. It was very refreshing and motivating to see older people outside of hospital and in their natural environment" and also "It is a good change from doing hospital placements. I got to understand the holistic nature of aged care".

We are very pleased with the results of our study specifically looking at our 'Chronic Disease and Community Care' elective.

The results of our study will be submitted for publication in an Aged Care Journal and we look forward to sharing it once it is published.

## Teaching on the Run

G-TRAC has been pleased to collaborate with Dr Fiona Lake from the TELL Centre University WA to bring Teaching on the Run to South Australia. Prof Lake had now trained 45 participants in 2 workshops.

In May she ran a Foundation 1 day Workshop which was very highly rated by the participants. They will use the skills for better student and staff supervision, training and mentoring. Simon Sheldrick, Resthaven Inc., a Teaching on the Run Trainer helped facilitate the workshop.

Many of last years participants are continuing to run Train the Trainer courses in their organisation and the community and sharing their experiences with others. A variety of partnerships between providers and educational organisations have actively embraced the concept of teaching within residential care and community based organisations for older people.



Prof Fiona Lake and Simon Sheldrick

The focus has been on the need for the future health workforce to better understand older people, the benefits of inter-professional care, and the rewards of working in this sector. Important has been the upskilling of all staff, not just those seen as the official

"teachers", because ideally the teaching, supervising and mentoring of students occurs in the workplace.

G-TRAC, at the University of Adelaide, has run two sets of workshops in the last year, focused on the clinical supervisor role.

Using the Teaching on the Run (TOTR) program, a highly regarded program developed by colleagues at UWA, G-TRAC has been able to engage with health professionals from all areas to work together with a single focus, ensuring an excellent student, resident and staff experience.

TOTR not only runs programs but trains local facilitators so the program can continue to run in a sustainable way. As workshop attendees came from all professions, they were able to bring their different perspectives of the learning environment and share ideas. In highly interactive workshops, participants were encouraged to reflect on their own ability as a teacher and supervisor, and look at ways to improve the student experience by planning, with Clinical Supervisor Agreements and Learning Plans, provide balanced feedback and identify students/workers who need support.

Teaching on the Run not only builds skills that can be used in the workplace, but explores the role of consumers involving them in this very important task of training the future workforce.

## G-TRAC Research Matters



Researchers from the University of Adelaide (Prof Renuka Visvanathan) and Flinders University (Dr Ruth Walker and Prof Julie Ratcliffe) have recently embarked on a qualitative study

*“The road to a diagnosis of dementia: a qualitative study of older people and family carer’s experiences”* which aims to gain insights into how older people who have recently been diagnosed with dementia experience the journey to diagnosis.

In particular they were interested in the role that dementia diagnostic services, which often represent the first step in the journey to dementia, played in terms of both timely diagnosis and enabling patients and their carers to adjust to the diagnosis.

To date, the study has involved in-depth interviews with 8 older people (n=4 males, 4 females) who have been diagnosed with dementia in the previous 3 months, as well as 5 carers. Participants are being recruited from both a hospital-based specialist dementia clinic and through Alzheimer’s SA.

Findings have demonstrated that participants report a range of experiences in terms of their journey to diagnosis. For those who had had a relatively ‘smooth’ journey, this had come about after reporting their concerns to their General Practitioner who had taken their suspicions seriously and referred them to a specialist clinic for diagnosis in a timely way. This had greatly assisted participants in terms of feeling supported and in making decisions around their future.

For those whose journey had been more difficult, this was often because of a more vague diagnosis (e.g. where this had occurred at a time of crisis, such as in hospital after a fall), or where they had been referred to inappropriate services in the first instance. For all participants, regardless of whether they had a straightforward or more difficult journey to diagnosis, there were clear gaps in the support provided to them post-diagnosis.

This study suggests that timely and appropriately configured dementia diagnostic services can serve a vital role in assisting older people and their family members to adapt to the dementia diagnosis, however there is a vital need for post-diagnosis support and follow-up.

## Frailty & Exercise

Frailty is a common Geriatric syndrome in clinical practice and is associated with ageing. Frailty is a recognizable state of increased vulnerability resulting from decline in reserve and function.

It includes deficit accumulation, fatigue, sedentary behaviour, weight loss, cognitive impairment, social isolation, the loss of muscle mass and the impairment of physical function. It is estimated that by 2050 four million Australians may be frail or at-risk of frailty. Exercise is a critical component of treatment for frailty. Exercise intervention have the potential to prevent, delay and reverse frailty. Exercise increases strength, balance, physical performance and mobility. Proteins play an essential role while exercising. The consumption of protein helps to maintain and built up muscle mass. Evidence suggests that exercise combined with protein intake may be more effective than exercise alone for improving physical function in the elderly. As the ageing process goes along with a natural decrease in muscle mass and strength, especially older people need to mind their daily protein intake.



Ms Agathe Daria Jadczyk at G-TRAC centre with simulation manikin’s Terry and Gerry.

Ms Agathe Daria Jadczyk, a PhD candidate at the University of Adelaide and an exercise physiologist from Germany, developed together with TQEH Aged & Extended Care Services and CSIRO, an exercise & nutrition program

for community-dwelling frail older people. Agathe will conduct a pilot study in cooperation with the ACH Group, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Centre for Physical Activity in Ageing to examine the effects of exercise in combination with protein intake on strength, gait speed, physical performance and mobility. Her aim is to establish effective exercise interventions for community-dwelling frail older people and to maintain their independence and quality of life.

**Positive and Healthy Ageing** *is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age, allowing people to realize their potential for physical, social and mental well-being throughout the life course. It challenges the stereotyped views of older people as ill and dependent and focuses on optimizing opportunities for good health, so that older people can take an active part in society and enjoy an independent and high quality of life.*

## Community Engagement



Rosie Bonnin Centre Coordinator with G-TRAC Advisors Barbara, Ngaire, Kathleen, Chrissy, Adrienne, Richard, Wayne and Sam with 5h year medical students

G-TRAC has continued to develop new and strategic partnerships with key stakeholders in health, aged care and the community. We continue to work with the University Community Engagement Branch on extending our reach and developing new partnerships and funding opportunities.

Our consumers are central to our work at G-TRAC and our Consumers Advisory Group continuous to grow. We are very thank full to the Consumers who are involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of our training and research programs. We have attracted an increasing number of consumers who come and talk to our medical students about their life and experiences and make them selves available for our student interviews and audits. Consumers have also provided a range of University of Adelaide researchers their viewpoints and ideas on a range of healthy ageing and integrated health topics.

We would particularly like to thank Mr Richard Hicks who has ably chaired the advisory group this year and has been the representative on the G-TRAC Centre Advisory Group.

## Paradise Campus



Grant White and Grant Edwards at G-TRAC

G-TRAC is fortunate to be located on a vibrant aged care campus at Paradise. The team at Paradise and Eastern Community Services on the campus have been an integral part of the G-TRAC journey. We recently farwelled the Manger Grant Edwards, who is also a G-TRAC Clinical Title Holder, to take up a new role with the Regional Assessment Services.

We welcomed the new manager Grant White and look forward to continuing to develop our collaborative partnerships in training and research.

## Think Tank

G-TRAC will be participating in the **Ageing and Living Well Think Tank and Innovation Collaborative** *Boomers – Riding the Long Wave – 'Wicked Problem' and Opportunity Spaces*



The Think Tank is a collaboration between the University of Adelaide's Health Sciences Faculty and the Entrepreneurship, Commercialisation and Innovation

Centre. The leadership 'Think Tank' is designed to bring together leaders, practitioners, academics and policy makers concerned to explore and evaluate identified opportunities particularly those which embrace and promote healthy ageing, independent living or consumer centred care in the community.

### Think Tank Purpose

*"It is a second chance to those fortunate enough to see the opportunity. Just as the youth of today have turned the meaning of the word "wicked" on its head and use "wicked" to refer to something that is awesome or extremely positive, it is time for boomers and the whole of society to view the aging of boomers through an entrepreneurial lens and see the tremendous infusion of talent that is becoming available to make the world a better place"* Patricia McDougall, 2014

As part of the Think Tank a range of podcasts and videos have been made available on the Think Tank website so everyone can be informed. <https://ecic.adelaide.edu.au/connect/ageing-well-think-tank/>

### Get Involved

We would like to hear from community members who would like to visit or get involved in our programs. You may wish to consider being an **"expert by experience"** sharing your health and life stories with our students or support our research activities.

## Contact Us

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