
3 COUNTRY STUDY NEWS

Issue 1, Australian Edition

June 2001

Why a newsletter?

Nicki Kemp

Welcome to our first 3CS newsletter, written for all participants in the 3CS study.

Many of you have been asking us about the progress of our study, and about whether there have been any results yet. We thought we would take this opportunity to update you on the latest news, and give you some information about how the study is developing.

As you know, the study has been running for about 18 months here at the Academic Department for Old Age Psychiatry at Prince of Wales Hospital. Many of you have been coming to visit us at POWH for over a year, and have spent a lot of time and effort answering our questions! We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your dedication and perseverance. Those couples who were unable to continue, we also thank you for your contribution.

Studies like ours rely on the generosity and good will of participants. Thanks! We couldn't have done it without you!

DID YOU KNOW...?

If you are finding that things are getting too much for you, or that you aren't coping, help is at hand! There are a number of services in the Sydney area offering information and practical help for people living with dementia and their carers.

You are not alone.

Here are some handy numbers:

Alzheimer's Association New South Wales: (02) 9805 0100

Alzheimer's Disease Help Line (free call): 1800 639 331

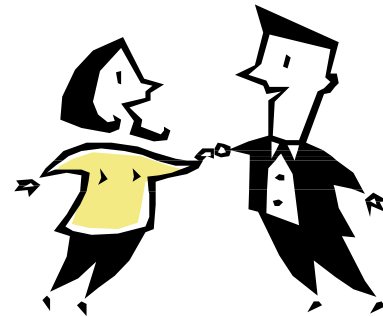
Carer Respite Centres (free call): 1800 059 059

Carer Resource Centres (free call): 1800 242 636

All About YOU!

A brief description of the people who are taking part in 3CS in Sydney, Australia.

Enrolment and study progress: Fifty-two couples initially enrolled in our study, five of whom subsequently discontinued (for various reasons including poor health). Currently, all but two couples have completed the 12 months, and 8 couples have started on the extension study during which we see you every six months.



A description of participants: Of the 52 couples, 40% of people living with dementia were female, as were 60% of carers. Couples had been together for an average of 47 years, with the shortest relationship being 10 years, and the longest 62 years. Couples had an average of two children, with the largest family having six children.

At the initial visit, carers reported that they spent an average of about 2 hours per day carrying out household tasks that they did not need to perform before their partner developed memory problems. However there was a large range of responses. Some caregivers spent no extra time, others reported that they spent 16 hours per day!

3CS in New York and Manchester

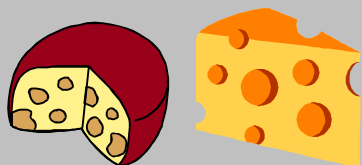
The progress of the study in the other two sites...

New York: Dr Mary Mittelman (the principal investigator in New York) has informed us that they have recruited 50 couples to take part in the study. The New York team has found it more difficult to recruit subjects, because from the start of the study, Aricept was available at no cost to those with health insurance (unlike in Sydney, where Aricept was put on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme only recently). The New York team will be responsible for data analysis, which will eventually provide answers about the best way of treating both patients and caregivers.

Manchester: The team in Manchester, led by Prof Alistair Burns has also recruited more than 50 couples. They have report that testing is going well.

As the study progresses, we hope to discover the similarities and differences between your experiences and those of patients and caregivers in America and the United Kingdom.

Age is something that doesn't matter, unless you are a cheese.



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR...

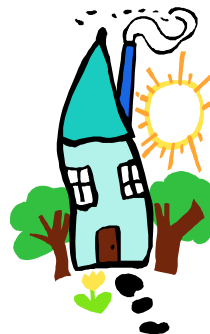
Professor Henry Brodaty

It seems hard to believe that more than 18 months have passed since we first asked couples to take part in the Three Country Study. Since we began we have seen 52 couples for 263 visits!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Three Country Study team here in Sydney – Karen Berman, Alisa Green, Nicki Kemp, Angie Leimena Lee-Fay Low, and Lynne Seifman. Their compassion and dedication has been appreciated by all participants, and the success of the study has been largely due to their efforts.

More importantly, I would like to thank you, the patients and carers who have participated in our study. You have been asked to visit our centre, often at great personal inconvenience to yourselves, and have been subjected to numerous questions.

For all this, we thank you. Your faith in us has made this study possible.



We Have Moved

Some of you have already visited us at our new home - we hope you like it (especially our new waiting room!) This is our new address:

Academic Department for Old Age Psychiatry
The Euroa Centre
The Prince of Wales Hospital
Avoca St, Randwick 2031

Phone: (02) 9382 3733

Future Directions.....

Our plans for the Three Country Study.

One of the main aims of our study was to discover whether extra counselling and information packages were beneficial for patients and carers, in cases where patients were receiving Aricept. In order to measure the benefits of counselling, we asked you to come in and answer our (lengthy) questions. Our task now is to analyse all the information you have given us.

Furthermore, for all of you who have participated in the Three Country study, we would like to follow your progress. For this reason we have asked all of you to keep coming back to see us every six months, so that we can check on how you are doing.