

\*\*\*News from the School of Public Health and Community Medicine\*\*\*  
Newsletter #23; December 2004  
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1. Note from the Head of School - Anthony Zwi

2004 has been a great year for the School. Under the banner of “Reinventing health – policy, practice and systems” we have further developed our research and public visibility in the fields of research translation and policy and practice. The new UNSW Strategic Plan has identified this area as an emerging strength. The Research Development team at the School have developed our research strategy for consultation and set in place a range of activities to deepen our methodological rigour and support researchers aiming to submit to competitive research bodies.

The School has been very successful, in both 2003 and 2004 in securing Faculty Research Grants, and has also won significant recognition through the award of NHMRC and ARC research grants in 2004 for 2005. Early next year we will be celebrating these successes as we take forward yet another round of grant applications.

On the teaching front, the new undergraduate curriculum has been successfully introduced with considerable backing, commitment and hard work from our many individuals and the Undergraduate team within the School. Major new components of the Program have been developed and successfully introduced. The Rural Health Unit, Muru Marri Indigenous Health Unit and Primary Care group have made significant contributions to shaping and forming the early medical curriculum. Many in the Professional Education Group have played major roles in developing and refining the promotion of quality in our programs, the establishment of teaching portfolios, and the development of information and other systems to enhance the quality of our educational activities. Our programs and courses run smoothly thanks to an excellent Postgraduate Coursework Team. General education programs offer opportunities to showcase our work to others in the University; so too will the Independent Learning Project, another creative component to the new medical program. Working together with our associated Centres, and other Research Centres interested in sharing their expertise and developing links with the next generation of researchers is key to a creative and dynamic research-teaching interface.

Our associated Centres have grown dramatically and been very successful in their research endeavours. Opportunities to work closely on growing research agendas which add value across disciplines, and to maximize opportunities to research and teach together warrant ongoing attention – we should innovate and engage where value can be added to mutual benefit and to promote health gain.

This year also saw the highly successful hosting of the 7th World Congress of Bioethics with key foci on feminist bioethics, indigenous health and public health ethics. The Muru Marri Indigenous Health Unit was launched and is set to be a dynamic player working with communities, researchers and policy makers in this crucially important field. Our second Research Student symposium was highly stimulating and invigorating – seeing the breadth and depth of work taking place in our Centre partners and within the School was

brehtaking. Our six "Reinventing health" seminars in 2004 covered cutting edge issues in health and health care and drew in several hundreds of people from health services, non-governmental organisations, the community, and other academic bodies.

Socially the School has held a barbecue, a Trivia night, lawn bowls evening and there's more to come. Each event has been special and memorable – an opportunity to spend some less pressured time together, to have some fun, wind down and enjoy the being together and appreciating what a wonderful city Sydney is. We hope to have a family picnic and a conjoints breakfast early next year.

None of this would be possible without teamwork, collaboration and mutual support. We have a great team, academic and non-academic, School staff, Centres and Conjoints, working together to promote health gain and to make a difference.

We pay tribute to Bruce Dowton, our Dean, and wish him well with future endeavours. His wisdom, guidance and integrity have been much appreciated at every level.

While the year has not been easy, and next year will not be any easier, we have much to be proud of and much has been achieved. I thank you all and wish you a healthy, peaceful, and more balanced time with family and friends, into 2005.

Anthony Zwi  
Head of School

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## 2. Letter from the Editor

Despite the at times oppressive heat, constant hectic pace, frenzied holiday preparations, drawn out high school presentation days and excruciatingly painful primary school performance classes, due in part to the ill-fitting leotard and ungainly dancing on stage (fortunately they asked me to sit down and let my children perform as originally scheduled) this is a great time of year. We have longer daylight hours, ripened mangoes, warmer water and a personal favourite, feasting with family and friends. Thanks to those of you who responded to my call for contributions to this bumper edition of the newsletter and any would-be editors out there, please raise your hands – so that I (or Kevin) can see them.

Sophie

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## 3. Staff Matters

### New staff:

My name is Stephanie Patterson and I am the newest addition within the Centre for Culture and Health. I am the project officer responsible for a unique project addressing Cultural Competence Training for the Home and Community Care Services within NSW. This project is funded by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) and the Centre for Culture and Health will be working on it in partnership with the NSW Transcultural Aged Care Services (TACS), the Aged and Community Services Association of NSW & ACT (ACS) and the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW (ECC). As I'm sure you are aware, the Centre for Culture and Health will be relocating to 30 Botany Streeton Tuesday 21 December 2004. Our contact numbers will all be remaining the same.

p.s. I'm Canadian and love cats too!!

Congratulations to Vanessa Anderson who is recently engaged – for any romantics among us, you must ask her how her husband-to-be proposed!

#### Achievements:

Mary-Louise McLaws been invited to be the Assistant Editor for the official journal of the Asia Pacific Society for Infection Control - this new journal will be called Infection Control Research and Practice. The journal will be published from Hong Kong. Mary-Lou accepted.

The course, 'Designing Short Courses and Workshops' an elective in the Clinical Education and Master of Public Health Programs, is the first course across the University to be delivered using WebCT Vista (latest version of WebCT) from a school. As an ITET 5 fellow, Sophie di Corpo who coordinates this course, was able to spend time this session designing the online component using Vista which is now integrated with the existing workshop. Students are currently completing the course and feedback so far has been very positive. Sophie could not have done it without the resources provided by the fellowship and her ever-patient partner in crime, Karsten Sommer.

The book launch for Sustainability in Health: Supporting global ecological integrity in public health, edited by Valerie Brown, John Grootjans, Jan Ritchie, Mardi Townsend and Glenda Verrinder and published by Allen and Unwin, was a great event - well attended, interesting, engaging and supportive.

#### Call for papers

Debbie Lawlor & Nish Chaturvedi from the Department of Social Medicine University of Bristol are planning a special themed issue of the International Journal of Epidemiology on the epidemiology and public health consequences of obesity. Details of how to submit relevant papers for this issue can be found at the following address

[http://www.epi.bris.ac.uk/ije/Call\\_for\\_obesity\\_papers.doc](http://www.epi.bris.ac.uk/ije/Call_for_obesity_papers.doc)

#### Whereforearthou?

Just a reminder that the School website has a feature called the Staff Out of Office Calendar. Its purpose is to provide an easy way for you to enter on our School website if and when you are away for easy reference by everyone else in the School including those at the front desk. The information is password protected (UNIPASS) and viewable only by School staff at:

<http://sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/sphcm.nsf/website/forstaff.staffmatters.outoffice>

Instructions are included on this web page however if you require further assistance please contact Karsten (Email: [k.sommer@unsw.edu.au](mailto:k.sommer@unsw.edu.au) or Tel: 9385 3200).

Please remember to use this as it helps the admin staff to answer queries about staff availability.

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#### 4. SPHCM Bowls by the sea – to bowl or not to bowl

The end of the year drinks saw a group of talented, enthusiastic SPHCM folk, and one man with a loud Hawaiian shirt, have a go at that sweat provoking, energetic sport of lawn bowls. I knew I was up for a challenge when before the greens had even been christened, I had a few of those competitive types (you know the type from the 2nd floor, who accidentally drop a bowling ball on your foot, oops sorry) asking for a lesson from our friend Bernie at Coogee Bowling Club. So, they were serious about this hey?

None of this just bowling and see what happens, no, no this was a comp! Not mentioning any names of course, Ilse and Lilanthi, and where did that Rachel girl come from again? After realising that bowling really wasn't a sport that I excelled at, there seemed to be no point in going on, so after a few games and maybe more I thought I would join the slovenly types who were far more interested in the food and drinks...

What more could you want from an afternoon? We were outside, the sun was shining, the balls were bowling and the drinks were cheap. A big thank you to Tim (Sally Nathan's better bowling half) and Kevin

Forde (loud Hawaiian shirt) for cooking the BBQ and to Cristina Colella and Vanessa Traynor for organising the food.

Am a bit concerned about our chief, Anthony Zwi; he was last seen on the bowling green as the sun was setting, storm clouds approaching, insisting on staying until he 'perfected his game' - I think there could be a challenge there. Watch out SPHCM drinks 2005!

Enjoy your break  
Justine Brindle

Editor's note: I was also at the bowling green (dare I admit to being one of the slovenly types) and the sight of the now-infamous-for-choice-of-shirt, Kevin Forde, so masterful at the bbq, has compelled me to add this piece some of you may have already seen but it really is good – will leave it to you to decide who was Griff, Joel, PJ and Dianne...

Griff was at the barbecue and Joel was at the barbecue and I was at the barbecue; three men standing around a barbecue, sipping beer, staring at sausages, rolling them backwards and forwards, never leaving them alone.

We didn't know why we were at the barbecue, we were just drawn there.....like moths to a flame.

The barbecue was a powerful gravitational force, a man-magnet. Joel said the thin ones could use a turn, I said yeah I reckon the thin ones could use a turn, Griff said yeah they really need a turn -it was a unanimous turning decision.

Griff was the Tong- master, a true artist, he gave a couple of practice snaps of his long silver tongs, SNAP SNAP, before moving in, prodding, teasing, and with an elegant flick of his wrist, rolling them onto their little backs. A lesser tong-man would've flicked too hard; the sausages would've gone full circle, back to where they started. Nice, I said. The others went yeah.

Kevin was passing us, he heard the siren-song- sizzle of the snags, the barbecue was calling, beckoning, Kevinnnnn ...come. He stuck his head in and said any room? We said yeah and began the barbecue shuffle; Griff shuffled to the left, Joel shuffled to the left, I shuffled to the left. Kevin slipped in beside me, we sipped our beer. Now there were four of us staring at sausages, and Griff gave me the nod, my cue. I was second-in-command, and I had to take the raw sausages out of the plastic bag and lay them on the barbecue; not too close together, not too far apart, curl them into each other's bodies like lovers -fat ones, thin ones, herbed and continental. The chipolatas were tiny, they could easily slip down between the grill, falling into the molten hot- bead-netherworld below. Carefully I laid them sideways ACROSS the grill, clever thinking.

Griff snapped his tongs with approval, there was no greater barbecue honour.

P.J. came along, he said looking good, looking good -the irresistible lure of the barbecue had pulled him in too. We said yeah and did the shuffle, left, left, left, left, he slipped in beside Kevin, we sipped our beer. Five men, lots of sausages. Joel was the Fork-pronger; he had the fork that pronged the tough hides of the Bavarian bratwursts and he showed lots of promise. Stabbing away eagerly, leaving perfect little vampire holes up and down the casing. P.J. was shaking his head, he said I reckon they cook better if you don't poke them. There was a long silence, you could have heard a chipolata drop; this new- comer was a rabble-rouser, bringing in his crazy ideas from outside. He didn't understand the hierarchy; first the Tong-master, then the Sausage-layer, then the Fork-pronger-and everyone below was just a watcher. Maybe eventually they'll move up the ladder, but for now - don't rock the Weber.

Dianne popped her head in; hmmm, smells good, she said. She was trying to jostle into the circle; we closed ranks, pulling our heads down and our shoulders in, mumbling yeah yeah yeah, but making no room for her. She was keen, going round to the far side of the barbecue, heading for the only available space. . . . the gap in the circle where all the smoke and ashes blew. Nobody could survive the gap; Dianne was going to try. She stood there stubbornly, smoke blinding her eyes, ashes filling her nostrils, sausage fat spattering all over her arms and face. Until she couldn't take it anymore, she gave up, backed off. Kevin waited till she was gone and sipped his beer. We sipped our beer; yeah. Griff handed me his tongs. I looked at him and he nodded. I knew what was happening, I'd waited a long time for this moment -the abdication.

The tongs weighed heavy in my hands, firm in my grip- was I ready for the responsibility? Yes, I was. I held them up high and they glinted in the sun. Don't forget to turn the thin ones Griff said as he walked away from the barbecue, disappearing toward the house. Yeah I called back, I will, I will. I snapped them twice, SNAP SNAP, before moving in, prodding, teasing, and with an elegant flick of my wrist, rolling them back onto their little bellies. I was a natural, I was the TONG- MASTER. Until Griff got back from the toilet.

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## 5. Helpful holiday hints

Brandy Plum Pudding Recipe:

1 or 2 bottles Brandy  
1 cup butter  
1 teaspoon sugar  
2 large eggs  
1 cup dried fruit  
baking powder  
1 teaspoon soda  
lemon juice  
brown sugar  
nuts

Before you start, sample the brandy to check for quality. Good, isn't it?  
Now go ahead.

Select a large mixing bowl, measuring cup, etc. Check the brandy again. It must be just right. To be sure brandy is of the highest quality, pour one level cup of brandy into a glass and drink it as fast as you can. Repeat.

With an electric mixer, beat 1 cup butter in a large fluffy bowl. Add 1 seaspoon of thugar and beat again. Meanwhile, make sue that the rum is of the finest quality. Try another cup. Open second bottle if necessary.

Add 2 arge leggs, 2 cups fried druit and beat till high. If druit gets stuck in beaters, just pry it loose with a drewscraver. Sample the brandy again, checking for tonscisticity. Next sift 3 cups of pepper or salt (it really doesn't matter.) Sample the brandy again.

Sift + pint of lemon juice. Fold in chopped butter and strained nuts. Add 1 babblespoon of brown thugar, or what ever color you can find. Wix mel. Grease oven and turn cake pan to 350 gredees. Now pour the whole mess into the coven and ake. Check the brandy again, and bo to ged.

Martha Lourey-Bird's Ten easy ways to up the 'activity factor' this Christmas

So, you want your (Christmas) cake and you'll eat it to! Well, if you don't want to start the new year a few kilos heavier, Martha Lourey Bird says "You either need to earn it or burn it!" and suggests the following ideas:

1. Walk, rather than drive, to the post office to post your Christmas cards
2. Rather than looking for the closest parking spot, park further away from the shops to do your Christmas shopping
3. Wear comfortable shoes when shopping so you can use it as a time to walk as much as possible (eg; walk up the moving escalators rather than just standing still!)
4. If you're doing the public transport option, hop off one stop earlier so you walk a bit further
5. Buy active presents for kids this Christmas and get outside and play with them too
6. Ask others to buy you an exercise related gift, such as, surfboard riding lessons, rock climbing, etc!
7. After Christmas lunch go for a walk rather than laying on the couch and bursting at the seams...
8. Use the extra time you have whilst not working to look for ways to be active and maybe try something fun you have never done before (eg; snorkeling, belly dancing, water aerobics, kite flying, etc!)
9. Plan an active family day out - eg; to the beach, zoo, roller blading, horse riding, etc.
10. Book an 'adventure holiday' rather than just getting away to do nothing at all!

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6. Postcards from the edge – Sonal returns to India and Kevin travels with a teenager to Europe.

Namaste! Soon after my return from a wonderful holiday in India (Mumbai and New Delhi), I was beckoned by Sophie to recount the details about my exciting trip. Where should I begin? I had a fantastic holiday, in spite of the fact that the Indians lost to Australia.... Hmmm, could the cricket lovers please stop humming Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, Oye, Oye.....

Apart from the visit marked with various reunions with close friends and family members (some of them who flew down specially to see us), the highlight of the trip was my daughter's first Diwali in India (commonly known as the festival of lights). The day was celebrated with family members and house decorated with marigold flowers and diyas (oil lamps). We made rangolis (floral designs with paint and flowers) for the puja (worship) and shared sweets (mithai) with our close friends. Diwali signifies the victory of good over evil and celebrates God Rama's homecoming to Ayodhya.

Along with this, we were able to attend a wedding of a close relative. For those of you who have not attended an Indian wedding, it usually includes four to five rituals and ceremonies, lots of bollywood dancing with girls in colourful traditional outfits, mehndi (henna) and bangles, and delicious curries like butter chicken, rogan josh served for every meal.

Needless to say, my daughter and I willingly obliged!

However, it was not all play and no work. In my pursuit of exploring and identifying opportunities to promote our School and its programs in India, I was successful in meeting some key members from Jawaharlal Nehru University, IDP Australia, Australian High Commission and All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

I feel totally rested after a hectic year and thoroughly enjoyed the hustle-bustle, scrumptious meals, exciting golf rounds, wonderful colours, cultural feast and warm spirit of India and am looking forward to the festive season and wish you all happy holidays!

Shubh Kamnayaein (Greetings to all), Sonal

Several months ago my 16 year old daughter said that if we really cared about her education we would take her to Paris so she could improve her French – which she is taking for the HSC. And, as we would be so close to Rome and London we might as well visit there as well. My wife then found a distant relative in Cornwall with whom she shares a great-great-great grandmother. Although we only had email contact with this relative she invited us to stay with them – much to my daughter’s horror who was wary of meeting anyone via the internet.

Of course as an economist I’m always thinking in terms of opportunity cost. If I stayed in Sydney I would undoubtedly be marking assignments, attending meetings (including a particular favourite – the workload committee) and reviewing the progress of PhD students. Not surprisingly I decided to go on the trip – although it was a near thing.

So that’s how our trip evolved. We flew to Rome, trained to Venice, Geneva, Avignon and Paris, then flew to London, hired a car and drove to Cornwall. Then drove back to London and finally flew home.

There were so many highlights it is hard to know where to begin, but there are some of them:

- Climbing to the second level of the Eiffel Tower with my daughter and then catching a lift to the top – next time I’ll definitely catch the lift all the way.
- Climbing the stairs at Notre Dame and the Arc de Triumph with my daughter – my wife sensibly found herself a coffee shop.
- Being amazed at what great builders the Romans were – although Rome is in desperate need of a few Gold Coast property developers to clean up the current mess.
- Buying medium fries at McDonald’s in Geneva and finding that it cost about \$A6 – although this turned out to be cheap compared to London prices.
- Seeing the Mona Lisa in the Louvre.
- Having a few warm beers to celebrate finding the grave of my wife’s great-great-great grandmother – and the distant cousins did not turn out to be axe murderers as my daughter feared.
- Seeing a production of “The Producers” in London – highlighting Hitler’s musical side.

All in all we had a terrific time – although I think I was the only one who actually tried to speak French.

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## 7. Lighter Staff Matters

In the beginning, God covered the earth with broccoli, cauliflower and spinach, combined with an abundance of green, yellow and red vegetables. He did this that Man and Woman would live long and healthy lives. Then, using God's bountiful gifts, Satan created Dairy Whip and Ice Cream. And Satan said: "You want hot fudge with that?" And Man said "Yes!" And Woman said: "I'll have one too.... with sprinkles."

And Lo, 10 pounds was gained unto them.

And so God created healthful yoghurt that Woman might keep the figure that Man found so fair. And Satan brought forth white flour from the wheat and sugar from the cane, and combined them. And Woman went from size 2 to size 14. So God said: "Try my fresh green garden salad." And Satan presented crumbled Bleu Cheese dressing and garlic toast on the side. And Man and Woman unfastened their belts following the repast. God then said: "I have sent you heart-healthy vegetables and olive oil in which to cook them." And Satan brought forth deep-fried squid rings, butter-dipped lobster chunks - and fried chicken so big it needed its own platter.

And Man's cholesterol went through the roof.

Then God brought forth the potato, naturally low in fat and brimming with potassium and good nutrition. Then Satan peeled off the healthful skin, sliced the starchy centre into chips and deep-fried them in animal fats, adding copious quantities of salt. And Man packed on more pounds. God then brought forth running-

shoes that his children might lose those extra pounds. And Satan introduced cable TV with remote control so Man would not have to toil changing the channels.

And Man and Woman laughed and cried before the flickering light and started wearing stretchy lycra jogging suits.

God then gave lean beef that Man might consume fewer calories and still satisfy his appetite. And Satan created McDonald's and the 99-cent double cheeseburger. Then Satan said: "You want fries with that?" And Man replied: "Yes! And super size them!" And Satan said "It is good."

And Man and Woman went into cardiac arrest.

God sighed ... and created quadruple by-pass surgery.

Satan chuckled and created - The Public Health System.

But wait there's more...

A new young monk arrives at the monastery. He is assigned to help the other monks in copying the old canons and laws of the church by hand. He notices, however, that all of the monks are copying from copies, not from the original manuscript.

So, the new monk goes to the head abbot to question this, pointing out that if someone made even a small error in the first copy, it would never be picked up. In fact, that error would be continued in all of the subsequent copies.

The head monk, says, "We have been copying from the copies for centuries, but you make a good point, my son."

So, the old abbot goes down into the dark caves underneath the monastery where the original manuscript is held as archives in a locked vault that hasn't been opened for hundreds of years.

Hours go by and nobody sees the old abbot. So, the young monk gets worried and goes downstairs to look for him.

He sees him banging his head against the wall, and wailing "We forgot the "R", We forgot the "R" His forehead is all bloody and bruised and he is crying uncontrollably.

The young monk asks the old abbot, "What's wrong, father?"  
With a choking voice, the old abbot replies, "The word is celebrate."

"The word is celebRate."