April 2013

From the Professor’s Desk

It is already April 2013 and we are not quite sure where the Xmas-New Year break went. I hope your holidays went well and you are all refreshed to put in another productive and satisfying year to benefit our patients and our profession.

The Academic General Practice Unit has started the year running. We welcome our new clinical GP Registrar (Dr Wayne Ling) and 2 academic GP Registrars (Dr Thi and Dr Nala). Thi is examining the mental health of Vietnamese patients while Nala is examining the mental health of Tamil migrants. I am sure you will meet Dr Thi Nguyen and Dr Nalayini Sugirthan as they wander around the neighbourhood as part of their research activities.

The Health Contribution Fund (HCF) has funded us to examine diabetes care improvement using the electronic practice based research network (ePBRN) and the data we have aggregated. This has started and we are looking to approach some of you to participate. It has minimal impact on your daily work as we extract the data in the background, preserving the privacy of the patients and staff. You will get 3-monthly reports on your data and be eligible to the full 40 RACGP Category 1 points.

We are about to trial an interdisciplinary undergraduate student team placement program in various units in Fairfield Hospital. This will work in tandem with the Fairfield Ambulatory, Community Health and Primary Care services to optimise the care for the patients enrolled in the SWSLHD Connecting Care Program. Part of this is the multidisciplinary shared care clinic for patients with chronic disease that we are starting in the GP Unit. Thanks to the GPs in our local health neighbourhood who have agreed to participate in this initiative. We believe it will benefit us and our patients.

In concluding, I would like to invite you to join us at our seminars on the last Friday of every month. In addition to sharing a sandwich or two and sharing experiences around the latest in clinical topics of interest, you will get meet our new members – and catch up with us older ones – as well as relevant clinicians at Fairfield Hospital.

See you soon.

Professor Siaw-Teng Liaw
The Effects of Immigration and Resettlement on the Mental Health of Sri Lankan Tamils in Sydney

I am Dr. Nalayini Sugirthan currently undertaking academic term at Fairfield GP unit. I’m a final year GP registrar attached with WentWest training provider.

I was born and bred in Sri Lanka and I’ve been in Australia for the last 5 years.

I’m realising that, the academic post as a fantastic opportunity to gain skills in teaching and education as well as supporting me to research an area I was really interested in - how we train GPs in research and critical thinking.

I’m sure this opportunity of doing academic term will give me more confidence and enthusiasm for my future career.

About my research study:-

This will be the first study to explore mental health problems amongst the Sri Lankan migrant community in western Sydney. The aim of the project is to identify the prevalence of anxiety and depression among Sri Lankan Tamil patients visiting general practices in western Sydney and to identify the factors related to migration which may be contributing to mental illness.

This is a cross sectional study. Subjects will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire and the Depression, Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS). The data will be analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software.

Even though the Sri Lankan Tamil migrant population is small, analyzing and identifying the prevalence of anxiety and depression in this group and factors contributing to these problems will help GPs better address these issues and assist in local primary health care planning.

This research project is being conducted by a research team from the University of New South Wales.

Identifying the prevalence of mental health problems in the Vietnamese Community

My name is Dr. Thi Nguyen. I decided to do an academic GP term because having done an MPH I was keen to try further research and work out if academic work is a good direction for me. Secondly mental health problems are very common in the Vietnamese community and a GP working in this area wanted to quantify this.

My project involves identifying the prevalence of mental health problems in the Vietnamese community. We are using the K10 tool to assess psychological distress. Correlating this with the demographic questionnaire will help us to find associations between distress and population risk factors such as traumatic experience, socioeconomic status, language barriers, isolation and education. We have recruited 249 participants. We hope to have a final report by July 2013.
**General Practice Unit Conducts an Interprofessional Learning Pilot Study**

General Practice Unit at Fairfield Hospital, UNSW Medicine and South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) are conducting a pilot study on Interprofessional Learning (IPL). The study commenced in mid-January 2013 and its evaluation will be completed by the end of May. It is supported by the Sydney Interdisciplinary Clinical Training Network (ICTN) and NSW Health Education and Training Institute (HETI).

The study has included eight medical students from UNSW, and four nursing students from The University of Western Sydney, Charles Sturt University and the Australian Catholic University. It has provided opportunities for medical and nursing students to learn together in some of the clinical units based in Fairfield Hospital. The educational rationale is that when students from different healthcare professions learn together it enhances their future working together. This study is also enabling staff to examine the logistics and issues involved with and resources required for creating and sustaining these learning opportunities.

Our thanks go to the clinical placements supervisors – Dr Tai-Tak Wan, Dr Oddom Demontiero, Dr Fiona Stafford-Bell, Dr Nicholas Cheng, Dr Peter McCaul and Ms Danielle Brown – for embracing this IPL opportunity. Thanks also go to the IPL Team members from SWSLHD and UNSW – Siaw-Teng Liaw, Kung Lim, Barbara Chapman, Christine O’Neal, Katrina Stott, Sanjyot Vagholkar, Winston Lo, and Glenda Austin – for taking this study this far.

**Meet our New GP Registrar—Dr Wayne Ling**

We welcome Dr Wayne Ling to the GP Unit for the first half of 2013 however Wayne is no stranger to Fairfield Hospital. He rotated here during his residency years at Liverpool to do emergency and medicine terms. Wayne also spent six months at Braeside doing palliative care.

Wayne studied medicine in Brisbane and has happily returned home to Sydney for his postgraduate training. He is enjoying the variety of general practice. The GP Unit is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4:30pm and offers a confidential general practice service to staff and community patients (closed between 1-2pm Monday-Thursday and 1-2:30pm on Friday). It is an academic unit of the University of NSW and participates in research and service development.
• 40 Category A points activity with the RACGP QI&CPD program.
• Meet accreditation needs and RACGP Standards (4th Edition).
• Receive feedback every 3 months on the following information from your practice and the network:
  ✓ % patients with DOB, gender, ATSI, ethnicity, smoking status, alcohol and allergies recorded.
  ✓ % consultation records that include reason for visit.
  ✓ % patients with records for allergies, smoking, alcohol, blood pressure, height, weight and BMI.
  ✓ % patients with risk factors for heart disease and diabetes.
  ✓ a list of diabetes patients requiring follow up care.
  ✓ a list of possible duplicate patient records for your action.
• Collegial relationships with colleagues in your neighbourhood.

A few words from Dr Luigi Genua about the ePBRN project:

“Dr Luigi Genua practices in Edensor Park. He joined the electronic practice based research network in May 2012. He says he was motivated by wanting to know how his practice was performing. “I wanted to know how we were doing compared to the rest of the practices.” In particular he wanted to know about gaps in care he has been providing. Dr Genua has found the feedback on his data very useful. He has already made changes to the way he does things and has seen his results improve. Dr Genua has not had any technical problems at the practice from the electronic data submission to the research network. “The hardest thing is finding the time to implement change from the results!” he says. He feels the process has helped improve the care his practice provides.”

Need more information

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If you would like any information about the General Practice Unit or this newsletter please do not hesitate to contact us on 9616 8520