National Drug Research Institute
Student Information Evening 2013

Overview

• Part of Faculty of Health Sciences and Tier 1
• WHO Collaborating Centre
• Relevance of NDRI to national strategy and beyond
• Key result areas:
  – Conduct high quality research that will contribute to primary prevention of harmful drug use and reduction of drug related harm
  – Disseminate research findings to policy makers, practitioners, public health professionals, other researchers, community interest groups and the public; and contribute to the building of national capacity for research in the prevention of drug related harm
• Links to a range of stakeholders (e.g. Health; Police; Drug consumers; Community)
• Staff based around Australia

Activities, Outputs and Outcomes

• Wide range of opportunities for HDR supervision and for casual work/research careers
• Varied professional background:
  – Psychology
  – Public Health
  – Epidemiology
  – Anthropology
  – Medicine
  – Sociology
• Engage in range of research and related activities:
  – Alcohol policy
  – Indigenous Australians
  – Justice health
  – Primary prevention and early intervention
  – Social contexts of drug use
  – People who continue to use alcohol and other drugs
  – Tobacco
  – New technologies
  – Social studies of addiction concepts

The effect of alcohol outlets and sales on alcohol-related injuries presenting at emergency departments in Perth, Australia, from 2004 to 2010

Michelle Hobday
PhD candidate
My project

- Epidemiology
- Quantitative
- Large datasets
- GIS
- Traditional and spatial statistics

Studying at NDRI

- Supervisors
- Chair of thesis committee
- Administrative staff
- IT
- Flexibility
  - Laptop
  - Location
- Seminars

Doing a PhD

- Choose supervisors who know your area of research well
- Expect to feel confused and out of your depth
- Research Skills: seeking information, statistics, writing
  - Difficult
  - Boring
  - Frustrating
  - Exhilarating
- Personal growth
Scholarships, research topics and student support

Susan Carruthers

Scholarships and Bursaries

- 2014 NDRI Doctoral Scholarships – Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug related harm
  Closes November 29
- Qualitative research on addiction – PhD Scholarship in Melbourne
  Closes November 4
- Honours and Masters Students – Research bursaries
  Close January 2014

Flyers available on the table or on the NDRI website

Postgraduate and Business Support Team

- Postgraduate Coordinator: Susan Carruthers
- Postgraduate Administration Assistant: Jo Hawkins
- Postgraduate Committee: Susan Carruthers, Steve Allsop, Dennis Gray, Simon Lenton, Tanya Chikritzhs, David Moore and James Fetherston (Student representative)

- Business Manager: Fran Davis
- Grants, Contracts and Travel: Patricia Niklasson and Jo Hawkins
- Administration and Clerical Support: Roexana Kirsten, Jillian Evans and Clare Dalais
- Communications Officers: Rachael Lobo and Vic Rechichi
- IT support: Paul Jones

Possible postgraduate research topics

Steve Allsop
Possible Postgraduate Research Topics

Climate Schools Combined
This postgraduate opportunity will use the current NDARC/NDRI Climate Schools Combined study, and will add to the work being done in the area of reducing drug and mental health issues in young people through online intervention. Contact Nyanda McBride or Steve Allsop.

School Health and Alcohol Harm Reduction Project – Online training for teachers
This PhD will undertake the development of online training for teachers in the SHAHRP project, and assess the impact of this style of training compared to face-to-face training. Contact Nyanda McBride.

Drug Trends (IDRS AND EDRS)
As part of these projects, each year we interview 100 West Australians who inject drugs and 100 users of ecstasy and other related drugs. In the past Graduate students at Honours and Masters level have attached short questions to either the IDRS or EDRS data collections (conducted in April-June each year) to investigate relationships of interest among the IDU and Ecstasy using samples. Contact Nyanda McBride.

Alcohol Harm Reduction with young people – how can Apps help?
This PhD will use mixed methods to identify content, issues and strategies for the formative development of an App to reduce alcohol related harm with young people, and an assessment of the App’s effectiveness in reducing alcohol related harm. Contact: Nyanda McBride.

Alcohol use during pregnancy – mainstream and paternal perspective
These two studies will use mixed methods to identify intervention strategies, methods and content to reduce alcohol-exposed pregnancies through (i) in mainstream populations and (ii) paternal involvement. Contact: Nyanda McBride.

Possible Postgraduate Research Topics

The use of Big Data is a developing area in the drug and alcohol field. A PhD is available to someone who has an interest in public health and a background in IT to define and explore the contribution that Big Data can make to the AOD field. Contact Nyanda McBride.

School Health and Alcohol Harm Reduction Project – Phase 3
Phase 3 of SHAHRP is a second booster phase provided to students in upper secondary schools. This phase will be refined using formative intervention research processes (focus groups, systematic literature review, pilot of draft intervention for feedback) before assessing impact. Contact: Nyanda McBride.

Impact of alcohol and other drug use on infant development
This would provide access to a large cohort and examination of factors that influence parental decisions about alcohol and drug use, and impact of parental alcohol and drug use on infants. Contact: Steve Allsop.

Looking at adolescent alcohol use – influences, contexts of use and harm
This study examines patterns of alcohol use and influences on and contexts of use among young people. There is the opportunity to examine these issues in a PhD that uses access to this population and beyond to examine the factors that influence choices about alcohol use, risky alcohol use and related harm. Contact: Steve Allsop.

Silk Road: the anonymous online drug marketplace
Online observations and interviews are being conducted with Silk Road users and sellers to better understand the dynamics of this new kind of drug market. A student may be able to join this effort by applying their own theoretical frameworks or questions to this environment. Contact: Simon Lenton.
Indigenous Australians

- This research program aims to prevent and reduce the burden of harm caused by alcohol and other drugs in Indigenous communities.
- The program is based on partnerships with Indigenous community-controlled organisations and includes a focus on building Indigenous research capacity, including building the capacity of Indigenous organisations to conduct their own research.

Examples of Current Projects

- National Indigenous Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Resource Project: The aim of this project is to develop culturally appropriate resources to assist health professionals in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health care settings to address the issues of alcohol and pregnancy and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cannabis Intervention: Conducted with six Indigenous community-controlled health services, this project is developing, trialling and disseminating a range of interventions specifically for use with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in a range of primary health care settings.
- A longitudinal study of influences on alcohol consumption and related harm in Central Australia, with a particular emphasis on the role of price: This project demonstrated that price-related control measures had a significant impact in reducing consumption and health-related harm, and that is not the only variable impacting on consumption and related harm.

Justice Health

- The link between drug use and offending behaviour is well established but has often been overlooked.
- Evidence-based interventions and treatments provide alternatives to incarceration and to enhance the outcomes of incarceration.
- NDRi’s Justice Health research group is committed to building capacity among Indigenous researchers with an interest in criminal justice system.

Examples of Current Projects

- Social and Cultural Resilience and Emotional Well-being of Aboriginal Mothers in Prison: The study’s aims include describing the health of Aboriginal women in prison, with a focus on social and emotional wellbeing, and identifying paths for the transition of culturally safe health care into the community so that health gains are maximised on release.
- Hepatitis C and its Treatment in Australian Custodial Settings: Using survey data and qualitative interviews with prisoners and prison health staff, this project will investigate the structural and cultural barriers which limit access to Hep C treatment and care in prison.
- Hepatitis C and its Treatment in Australian Custodial Settings: This thesis attempts to explore some of the research gaps pertaining to HCV in custodial settings.

Illicit Drugs Policy

- Research informing policy and practise interventions that aim to reduce the harm to individuals, families, organisations and communities for people who continue to use alcohol and other drugs.
- An emerging area is the role of new technologies in drug use and opportunities for information dissemination, data collection and intervention delivery for the alcohol and other drug sector, drug users and the wider community.
- Recent expansion into how substance use, health, and mental health problems interrelate.

Examples of Current Projects

- Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS)/Ecstasy and related Drugs Reporting System (EDRS): The Perth arm of research projects to monitor illicit drug use and drug market trends in major cities across Australia.
- Cannabis Growers study. Anonymous web survey of Australian small-scale cannabis cultivators; part of international collaboration conducted in nine countries.
- Silk Road Study. This study aims to determine how access to drugs through the Silk Road online drug marketplace in the ‘hidden web’ affects the life trajectories, drug use and harms of Silk Road buyers.
- Long-term evaluation of a brief intervention for adolescents with alcohol or other drug problems: Using the WA Data Linkage System.
Ethnographic and Addiction Research - Melbourne

- Ethnographic research: Focuses on diverse topics – street-based injecting drug use, amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), alcohol, service provision and HCV infection – with research being conducted in international and Australian jurisdictions. Staff and PhDs employ a mix of research methods: ethnography and other qualitative approaches, ethno-epidemiology and agent-based modelling.
- Social studies of addiction concepts: This program of research takes addiction as its central object of study, mapping and monitoring changes in addiction concepts and language in Australia and in selected sites around the world.

Examples of Current Projects
- Developing the capacity to model the impact of interventions that target high-risk drinking among young Australians: This research will improve understanding of the individual, social, cultural, economic and geographical factors shaping heavy drinking and related problems via the integration of ethnographic and epidemiological methods.
- Reducing health, social and economic burden of injection drug use in Australia: This NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence is generating new evidence on ways to address the health and social burden of IDU in Australia and develop tools for translating research into policy and practice.
- Analysing and comparing concepts of addiction for improved social and health outcomes in Australia: Using an international comparative method involving Australia and Canada, this research will analyse the key concept underlying much of the political struggle over AOD policy and service provision – addiction – to better inform policy and improve AOD-related outcomes.

Contact details on the NDRI website

Next Steps

- Stay for refreshments – prospective co-supervisors are available for a chat
- If you can’t stay (or want to find out more):
  - Have a look at NDRI website: all our work and researchers are at ndri.curtin.edu.au
  - Look at projects in your interest area
  - Look up profile of researchers working in that area/on that project
  - Then give them a call or send them an email
- For further information on postgrad study at NDRI, go to ndri.curtin.edu.au/students
- Stay up to date with NDRI events or scholarship and other opportunities by joining our mailing list and via social media (NDRIau)
- Please complete a feedback sheet