National Drug Research Institute

Postgraduate student information evening 2014
Overview

- Part of Faculty of Health Sciences, Curtin Research Institute status
- 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
Figure 1: Possible relationship between outlets and alcohol-related injuries
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
Conclusion: I survived!

"I did a PhD and did not go mad."

http://blog.eag.eu.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/i-have-a-phd-700x320-180x180.jpg
Scholarships, student support and research topics

Susan Carruthers
Scholarships and Bursaries

- NDRI Doctoral Scholarships in Perth and Melbourne
- Honours and Masters Students – Research bursaries
  Close January 2015 (flyers available on the table or on the NDRI website)

Postgraduate Support

- Postgraduate Coordinator: Susan Carruthers
- Postgraduate Administration Assistant: Jo Hawkins
- Postgraduate Committee: Includes senior staff and student representative
- Business support in range of areas, including grants, contracts, travel, administration and clerical support, communications, IT
Research Topic Suggestions (or suggest your own)

• Aboriginal youth involved with the criminal justice system
  Contact: Jocelyn Jones and Mandy Wilson
  Several potential opportunities with projects exploring Aboriginal youths’ involvement with the criminal justice system, e.g. 2015 project exploring sexual and mental health of Aboriginal youth at Banksia Hill Detention Centre.

• Adolescent alcohol use – influences, contexts of use and harm
  Contact: Steve Allsop
  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.

• Alcohol harm reduction with young people – how can apps help?
  Contact: Nyanda McBride
  Develop an App to reduce alcohol related harm with young people.

• Alcohol use during pregnancy – mainstream and paternal perspective
  Contact: Nyanda McBride
  Identify intervention strategies, methods and content to reduce alcohol-exposed pregnancies.

• Big Data is a developing area in the drug and alcohol field.
  Contact: Nyanda McBride
  Explore the contribution that Big Data can make to the AOD field.
Postgraduate Research Topic Suggestions

• **Cannabis consumption and adverse outcomes in young adults**  
  *Contact: Robert Tait, Steve Allsop*  
  International collaboration examining the impacts of cannabis use by adolescents. Unique dataset allows PhD student to address research questions with ‘rare’ but serious outcomes.

• **Drug Trends (IDRS AND EDRS)**  
  *Contact: Simon Lenton, Marina Nelson and James Fetherston*  
  We interview 100 West Australians who inject drugs and 100 users of ecstasy and related drugs. Honours and Masters students can add short questions.

• **Impact of alcohol and other drug use on infant development**  
  *Contact: Steve Allsop*  
  Access to a large cohort and examination of factors that influence parental decisions about alcohol and drug use, and the impact of parental alcohol and drug use on infants.

• **Incarcerated Aboriginal mothers**  
  *Contact: Mandy Wilson and Jocelyn Jones*  
  Analysis of data collected on social and emotional wellbeing and cultural resilience of incarcerated Aboriginal mothers, potentially examining impact of use on their communities, family and children.

• **New psychoactive substances (NPS)**  
  *Contact: Simon Lenton, Robert Tait*  
  Little is known about use of NPS, or ‘legal highs,’ or those who choose NPS over ‘traditional’ illicit drugs. Project allows PhD candidate to develop own questions in an emerging field.
Postgraduate Research Topic Suggestions

• **School Health and Alcohol Harm Reduction Project**  
  *Contact: Nyanda McBride*

  *Online training for teachers:* This PhD will develop online training for teachers in the SHAHRP project, and assess the impact of this style of training compared to face-to-face.

  *Phase 3:* This phase will be refined using formative intervention research processes (focus groups, systematic literature review, pilot of draft intervention for feedback) before assessing impact.

• **Social Studies of Addictions (Melbourne)**  
  See [http://addictionconcepts.com/about/](http://addictionconcepts.com/about/)

  How is addiction depicted in popular culture and how do these depictions relate to policy, law and service provision? How do individuals experience diagnoses of addiction? How do public understandings of addiction and media representations shape drug use policy and practice?

• **Substance use and suicide ideation in older adults**  
  *Contact: Robert Tait*

  Older adults have the highest rate of suicide, and this is likely to increase with demographic changes. This project will identify key risk factors for suicide ideation among older adults using a multi-method approach, combining rich in-depth interviews with population data.
Research areas, projects and who to talk to
Alcohol Policy

- A broad approach to alcohol that spans issues of social, health and regulatory policy relevance throughout Australia and overseas.
- International reputation and contribution to the aetiology of disease and injury.
- State and local-level focused projects focus on trading hours, density of licensed premises, violence and road crash mortality and morbidity.

Examples of Current Projects
- National Alcohol Indicators Project (NAIP)
- Young Australians Alcohol Reporting System (YAARS)
- Investigating the impact of liquor superstores in WA
- National Alcohol Sales Data Project
- Modelling the public health and safety impacts of liquor licensing changes on communities: enhancing evidence-based liquor licensing decisions
- Off-site outlets and alcohol-related harm
- Cochrane review of workplace AOD programs
Indigenous Australians

- 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**
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cannabis interventions
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ AOD knowledge centre
- Identifying opportunities for the prevention of harmful use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among young Noongar (Aboriginal) people
- What difference does treatment make? Psychometric properties of a measure of young people’s progress in residential rehabilitation
- Second Stage Local evaluation of East Kimberley Communities for Children initiative for children and their families
- Evaluation of the 'Makin Tracks' 3 project

Talk to:
- Dennis Gray
- Anna Stearne
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
- Hepatitis C, prisons and treatment opportunities (HePATO)
- From Broome to Berrima: Building Australia-wide research capacity in Indigenous offender health and health care delivery
- Hepatitis C and its treatment in Australian custodial settings (PhD Thesis)
Community, Prevention and Early Intervention

• Explores factors that prevent the early and problematic use of alcohol and other drugs, particularly during childhood and adolescence.
• Includes a focus on early intervention programs for high risk children, families and communities.
• Research and evaluation on social determinants of drug use includes work on the impact of alcohol during pregnancy, parental support, and school-based drug education.

Examples of Current Projects
• Internet-based universal prevention for anxiety, depression and substance use in young Australians (CSC Study)
• Adolescent alcohol use: determining priorities for parent interventions
• Substance use, mental disorders and physical illness in childhood and early adulthood
• The determinants of harm reduction policy implementation for the prevention of HIV in Thailand
• International dissemination of the School Health and Alcohol Harm Reduction Project (SHAHRP)
Illicit Drugs Policy/Online and New Technologies

- Research informing policy and practice 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 AOD sector, drug users and wider community.
- Recent expansion into how substance use, health, and mental health problems interrelate.

Examples of Current Projects

- Drug trends – IDRS and EDRS
- A pilot study investigating Silk Road
- Evaluation of the ‘Expanded Naloxone Availability in the ACT’ program
- Online survey of small-scale domestic cannabis cultivation
- Social supply of cannabis among young people in Australia
- 10-Year outcomes of an emergency department delivered brief intervention with adolescent alcohol and other substance users
- Internet interventions for substance use problems
- Evaluating social media communications in prosocial and antisocial behaviours associated with alcohol misuse in young people

Talk to:

Simon Lenton

Robert Tait

Marina Nelson
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, other qualitative approaches, ethno-epidemiology etc.
- **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 select sites around the world.

**Examples of Current Projects**
- Experiences of addiction, treatment and recovery: An online resource for members of the public, health professionals and policymakers
- Drugs and addiction in sport: A qualitative pilot study
- Pilot study exploring the role of the law in the identification and management of addictions
- Analysing and comparing concepts of addiction for improved social and health outcomes
- Documenting and better understanding the life trajectories of people who inject drugs
- Developing the capacity to model the impact of interventions that target high-risk drinking among young Australians
- Reducing the health, social and economic burden of injecting drug use in Australia
- Understanding and reducing alcohol-related harm among young adults in urban settings
Next Steps

• Stay for refreshments – prospective co-supervisors and former students 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
• Please complete a feedback sheet so we can make this event useful
• 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)
• Drugs, Policy and Public Health ‘winter school’ – July 2015