

He Kete Kōrero



WELLINGTON

University of Otago, Wellington Newsletter | Autumn 2016

Dean's welcome

Kia ora koutou kātoa

Welcome to the University of Otago, Wellington's newsletter. In this issue, we highlight some of last year's successes and look forward to continuing achievements in a busy 2016.

At the University of Otago, Wellington (UOW), we focus on providing excellence and leadership in teaching and research across a range of health professional disciplines both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. We have major strengths in our collaborations and work within the Wellington community and wider region. For our undergraduate medical programme we capitalise on the strengths of our local tertiary hospital and excellent learning opportunities provided by the lower North Island region's provincial hospitals and primary health care centres. Similarly the undergraduate medical, radiation therapy and postgraduate programmes collaborate closely with the District Health Boards around the country.

This year we welcomed 24 first year Radiation Therapy students, 54 Physiotherapy students, Dietetics students and more than 100 4th year Medical students to the Wellington campus. They join more than 200 5th and 6th year Medical students continuing their study towards becoming excellent health practitioners.

We have some really exciting research, teaching, facilities and collaborations here at UOW and I look forward to continuing to share our achievements with you in the year ahead. This newsletter provides just a few highlights and examples of our work. You can find more details about the latest research and what we do at www.otago.ac.nz/wellington.

Hei konā mai

Sunny Collings
Dean and Head of Campus
University of Otago, Wellington



Curious kids and cool science

A pilot project to help connect children's innate curiosity with real life science is underway at the UOW. The 'science club' with students from Maoribank and Pinehaven Schools in Upper Hutt, is exploring how our bodies work, especially the heart and lungs, emphasising the relationship between exercise and health.

"Kids are naturally curious about the world they live in. We need to foster this innate drive to learn, and help them discover more about how and why things work. We're working with the children's classroom teachers, as well as clinicians and scientists across the Wellington region to make the science accessible, fun and relevant for these kids," says project leader Dr Max Berry, from the Paediatrics Department.

"We supported classroom learning with a visit to the UOW Centre for Translational Physiology (www.otago.ac.nz/uow-physiology) to show science in action, looking at topics of exercise and health, hygiene and our environment as well as the effects of sugar-based drinks on oral health," Dr Berry says.

Science in action and with practical applications will help the 7-11 year olds relate real life problems to science, become 'science ambassadors' and take the knowledge and the excitement back to school.

Dr Max Berry and some of the curious kids.



Rental 'Warrant of Fitness' to start in Wellington and Dunedin

Nearly half of all New Zealanders live in rental accommodation, which is on average older than owner-occupied dwellings, built to older less-stringent building codes, and less well maintained. The Children's Commission has called for a rental WoF to help improve children's health and education.

UOW researchers have been funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand to study the effects of introducing a rental housing Warrant of Fitness (WoF). He Kainga Oranga/ Housing and Health Research Programme based at UOW is working with Wellington and Dunedin City Councils on the rental WoF this year, requiring basic standards for things like ventilation, heating, safety and hygiene in a rental property.

He Kainga Oranga will measure how a WoF affects the rental market and tenant health in Wellington and Dunedin, compared with control cities Lower Hutt and Invercargill, which are not planning to introduce a rental WoF at this stage.

Science in te reo Māori

Experiments that extract DNA from saliva and use disclosing tablets to look at plaque on teeth are not new, but the University of Otago, Wellington (UOW), and Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngā Mokopuna have done these experiments in te reo Māori. Staff from the Department of Pathology at UOW recently worked with a group of 13 and 14-year-old students from Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngā Mokopuna for a day of science, exploring bacteria growth in their mouths.

This is part of the ongoing partnership between the kura and UOW. Students gain NZQA credits, while UOW staff see how science can be taught with te reo. Dr Sara Filoche (pictured below with students) who led the science teaching and experiments said it's a great opportunity for students to learn hands-on about science and its practical uses first-hand, and also a valuable contribution to the local Wellington community, building on our partnership with the kura.



Interprofessional education



Recently 64 UOW students from four health disciplines experienced interprofessional education (IPE) while working on a 'long-term conditions' project. Traditionally clinical students train in their health disciplines separately until they start actually working in multidisciplinary health care. The IPE learning approach fosters patient-centred team-based health care, with different health disciplines working together.

An enthusiastic group at UOW called the Wellington Interprofessional Teaching Initiative (WITI) has developed the innovative programme. This year students from four separate disciplines, dietetics, medicine, physiotherapy and radiation therapy,

were placed into pre-planned mixed discipline groups. Each group was given details of a pre-selected patient with a long-term condition recruited by general practices living in the Wellington community. Their task was to plan a joint visit to a patient in their home and interview them about their perceptions and experiences of their conditions and health care.

UOW ran a similar programme each year from 2011-2014 and has been heavily involved in other IPE activities, such as the Tairāwhiti IPE programme based in Gisborne which started in 2012 and the inaugural UOW Hauora Māori/ IPE Orientation Day in February 2016. Read more at: www.otago.ac.nz/IPE

Recent research snippets from UOW

Barriers to contraception for indigenous Māori teenage mothers

A study from UOW, found health system barriers for young Māori mothers when trying to access timely contraception. The study looked at contraception before and after pregnancy and aimed to identify barriers and facilitators to contraception for Māori teenage mothers. The research is part of 'E Hine', a longitudinal qualitative Kaupapa Māori study involving Māori women aged 14-19 years old. *Contact Dr Bev Lawton, Women's Health Research Centre, UOW.*

Antipsychotic drug clozapine found to have significant gastrointestinal side effects

Research from UOW, and Capital and Coast District Health Board (CCDHB) has shown that the antipsychotic drug clozapine dramatically slows bowel function. *Contact Dr Susanna Every-Palmer, Department of Psychological Medicine, UOW.*

Sleep research: How much do parents know about their children's sleep?

A pilot study by Dr Philippa McDowall and others in Paediatrics on what parents know about their children's sleep was featured in international media. The study found many parents have only a poor understanding of how much sleep their children need. Read here: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-kids-sleep-idUSKCN0WH2TS>

Study identifies new risk factors for stroke

Research has identified new risk factors for secondary stroke in patients who have suffered a 'mini-stroke' or transient ischaemic attack (TIA). The findings open the way for developing potential new treatments to prevent subsequent full strokes, the researchers believe. *Contact Dr Shieak Tzeng, Centre for Translational Physiology, UOW.*

You can find more detail on these and other stories at www.otago.ac.nz/wellington

Pathology day November 2015

Do you wonder who really was Jack the Ripper? Why you are losing your marbles? Or, why you are tired all the time? Pathologists are involved in diagnosing and researching many such life mysteries. At UOW's 2015 Pathology day, about 200 people learned that pathologists can diagnose cancer with just a few cells, how to protect themselves against dementia and who really stalked the streets of Victorian London.

The department opened its pathology museum with tours, guiding visitors through common cancers. The electron microscope gave a detailed view inside cells, and visitors to the new Wellington Southern Community Laboratory were able to observe the chemistry and haematology lines where robotic analysers diagnose up to 4000 patients per day.

20th Public Health Summer School, 2016

In February 2016, UOW's Department of Public Health hosted its 20th Summer School and celebrated with a huge range of courses and speakers and 800 registrations – the highest number yet. Now the largest and longest running summer school of its type in the Southern Hemisphere, it's an intense three week learning experience. Leading public health experts from around NZ and the world gathered to discuss the big issues affecting human health such as child obesity, tobacco control, and diseases like rheumatic fever that are linked to poverty, and solve them with practical actions. As well as focusing on key emerging issues, the Public Health Summer School includes a core set of courses such as epidemiology and Māori health, aimed at increasing the skills of the workforce.



2015 Staff Awards

Congratulations to the following staff who won the inaugural UOW staff awards for 2015 to celebrate remarkable contributions:

Senior Researcher 2015:

Professor Philippa Howden-Chapman

Emerging Researchers 2015:

Dr Angela Ballantyne, Dr Jason Gurney

Research Support 2015:

Ms Kate Sloane

Innovation in Learning and Teaching, at UOW 2015: **Associate Professor Sue Pullon**

Outstanding Learning and Teaching 2015:

Professor Diana Sarfati

Outstanding Service 2015:

Dr Joanna MacDonald & Ms Ann Thornton, as a team.

Appointments at UOW

Congratulations to Diana Sarfati and Nick Wilson who have been promoted to full Professor, and to Shieak Tzeng promoted to Associate Professor in November 2015.

Professor Diana Sarfati is the Director of the Cancer Control and Screening

Research Group within the Department of Public Health. Professor Nick Wilson trained as a medical doctor and then specialised as a public health physician. He has a strong interest in prevention and big-impact public health issues, leading to work particularly in the field of tobacco-use epidemiology and control. Associate Professor Shieak Tzeng is in the Department of Surgery & Anaesthesia, and Director of the Centre for Translational Physiology.



Professor Diana Sarfati

Cancer Society award

Professor Brett Delahunt's exceptional, long-standing voluntary service and leadership to cancer research was acknowledged by the Cancer Society of New Zealand in December 2015. He received the Meritorious Service Award, their top award,

in recognition of the voluntary hours he dedicated to fostering the Cancer Society's goals in cancer research. His service with the organisation has spanned 20 years.

A professor of pathology and molecular medicine at UOW, Brett is also the Chair of the National Scientific Advisory Committee of the Cancer Society of New Zealand since 2001. Among his many academic awards, he is regarded as one of the society's most valued humanitarians, devoting on average over 100 hours of voluntary service each year. Brett says the strides made in cancer research could not be done without his team, and he credits the individuals of the National Scientific Advisory Committee for their work and contribution.



Professor Brett Delahunt

Officer of the NZ Order of Merit

We congratulate Professor Kevin Pringle who was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year's Honours. In September 2015, the Child Health Service of CCDHB and the Department of Paediatrics & Child Health, UOW, held a Festschrift and vote of thanks to celebrate and honour his work. Many wonderful highlights of his long and successful career as a leading paediatric surgeon, lecturer and researcher were discussed by friends and colleagues. He developed paediatric surgery in Wellington and saw a vast number of changes throughout his career. He came to Wellington from the University of Iowa in December 1987 as a paediatric surgeon, senior lecturer and clinical leader in paediatric surgery and established the first specialist paediatric surgical service at Wellington Hospital.

Professor Pringle taught ethics as well as paediatric surgery, and was Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at UOW for 15 years. He had a period as acting HOD for the Department of Surgery and Anaesthesia, and taught the Diploma of Child Health and the advanced paediatric life support courses and in the undergraduate medical programme at UOW.

Professor Pringle faced many complications and incidents in his career, some of which had never been seen before in young children. He says that the ability to keep calm and think on his feet was essential.

"Successful surgery is a team effort," Professor Pringle says. He believes the Wellington Neonatal unit is one of the best in the Southern Hemisphere, and receiving a New Year's honour was a fitting tribute to the tremendous teams who have worked with him, and contributed to his success, over the years. Read more in a recent news article at: <http://fw.to/y7PjNnY>



Professor Kevin Pringle

A new initiative for supporting very large patients

Devising ways to better support very large patients in a range of healthcare settings is the focus of a newly launched collaboration called Bariatric Management Innovation. Lesley Gray, a senior lecturer in Primary Health Care and General Practice at UOW, is working with co-founders Dr Caz Hales, Victoria University of Wellington, and Todd Bishop, Chief Executive of Essential HelpCare, a company which provides equipment to hospitals and other healthcare providers.

The aim is to support health care professionals to ensure that very large patients receive safe, appropriate and equitable care. Read more at: www.otago.ac.nz/otagobulletin/research/otago596824.html



From L to R: Todd Bishop, Assoc Min of Health Hon Peter Dunne, Dr Caz Hales, Prof Sunny Collings (UOW), Dr Megan Clark (VUW), and Lesley Gray at launch.

Upcoming Events

Inaugural Professorial Lecture by Professor Diana Sarfati Cancer Care and Outcomes: Uneven Playing Fields

Thursday 5 May 2016, 5pm

Nordmeyer Lecture theatre, University of Otago, Wellington

The Public Health Department runs Friday seminars on a variety of Public Health topics. Please see:

www.otago.ac.nz/wellington/departments/publichealth

To view all UOW upcoming events go to: www.otago.ac.nz/UOWevents

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For more information on any of these items please contact fleur.templeton@otago.ac.nz