

AvGas

Issue Four : September 2009



“May you live in interesting times” is said to be a Confucian proverb. However, the earliest reference to it is in a science fiction story in the 1950s by Duncan Munro who said that in fact it was not a curse but a blessing. This may possibly have related to a real Chinese proverb – “It’s better to be a dog in a peaceful time than a man in a chaotic period”. It certainly appears that we are going through a relatively chaotic period where the only thing that is constant is change, but perhaps Munro had it right in that it is really a blessing.

One of the characteristics of the Occupational and Aviation Medicine Unit is that we never sit on our laurels and that we always seek to continue innovating to keep our pole position as the world’s leaders of distance education in aviation medicine and occupational medicine. To that end we have been looking to change our software and Pooshan Navathé and Geoff Tohill have been working on behalf of the staff on a new software package that will integrate with OceanBrowser to provide a web-based teaching system that will be rolled out next year. We are very excited about this prospect and are very grateful to Pooshan and Geoff for the enormous amount of work that they’ve done on this.

OceanBrowser 3 is also being developed by Rodney at the same time and we hope to see a combination of these two software educational delivery systems being fully integrated to give you the brightest and best of international distance learning experiences!

We are thinking about new subjects and may even make a foray into space medicine. Our graduates have included astronaut candidates and a panellist on the selection for the Korean astronaut in 2008. There will inevitably be positive spin offs for the mainstream aviation medicine and occupational medicine courses.

Times have also been chaotic in that we have been reviewing and revising a lot of our materials as we go along and this means that the course content continues to get better. The teleconferencing system may not look different from the front end, but for the staff it has been considerably enhanced to enable us to run our own teaching systems.

One important initiative for us this year has been an increasing focus on research as we foreshadowed, and the research methods paper (AVMX785) ran in semester two of 2008 and semester one of 2009. We would encourage people to think about research methods, whether they are doing a Masters project or whether they are considering a professional fellowship training programme, as a relatively painless way of covering off their need for research methodologies, bio-statistics and epidemiology education. We would also encourage students to think about doing research with us and all of our staff are getting up to speed with research supervision as we turn ourselves from a teaching focused organisation into one that has a strong basis for its teaching in operational and scientific research.

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Rob and Professor John Ernsting at the Scotland Residential School

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These have been turbulent times for us financially. For the first time our student enrolment numbers have fallen following seven years of a steady progressive rise in class sizes. The recession has meant that the numbers of students who are funded by their employers to study with us are declining. We have responded to this by reorganising our course offerings, reducing the overall number of papers that we



offer in any one year, and consequentially the staff commitments required to complete this. This has not been without its pain for everyone and I would like to pay my respects and gratitude to the staff for the way that they responded so positively to a 40% reduction in our operating budget. And we have also been subject to a number of reviews and audits coming one on top of the other which may or may not have added value to what we do, but it has certainly significantly increased our workload in activities outside of teaching.

The residential school of course was again the highlight of the year. This was tempered by the sad death of Professor John Ernsting just three days after participating in our Stirling residential school and attending our dinner at the Chapel Royal of Stirling Castle. We were extremely privileged to share the last lecture given by Professor Ernsting whose long and distinguished career makes him an icon in aviation medicine.

The 2010 residential school will be in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch in New Zealand and the programme is already well advanced (in fact David Powell has the 2011 programme already firming up!). This should be a very exciting week and we look forward to seeing you all there.

The greatest asset of a course like ours is the quality of its staff. The new Course Director structure with streams of aviation medicine, occupational medicine and aeromedical retrieval and transport, as well as a research stream, has proven to be very effective at allowing individual streams to innovate and experiment, and has also enabled us to build highly effective and cohesive teaching teams. I believe that we have now built the best possible team that we need to move forward into the next decade. New staff like Jeff Stephenson, Sarah Aldington, Karyn Hathaway, Peter Larsen and Tim Gilmore have all hit the ground running and have provided inspiration and challenges to the older members of the teaching staff! We have a great team moving forward and we are working on professional development programmes for that team to enable them all to become promoted to professorial positions when their research outputs permit.

We currently have three active PhD students with two more in the wings. My vision is for the Unit to have 20 PhD students currently active by the year 2020 with a corresponding number of Masters, Diploma and Certificate students further down the pyramid. This would make us a substantial and busy teaching and research department and would provide us with a graduate profile that would make us the best in the world. It is already very pleasing to see where some of our students have ended up in very senior positions, which means that the University of Otago has made a real difference to aviation and occupational medicine practice around the world.

2010 will be a great year – by then many of our growing pains will have resolved and our growth trajectory will be re-established. We on the staff all look forward to working with you on making 2010 a great personal and professional success.

Handwritten signature of Rob Griffiths

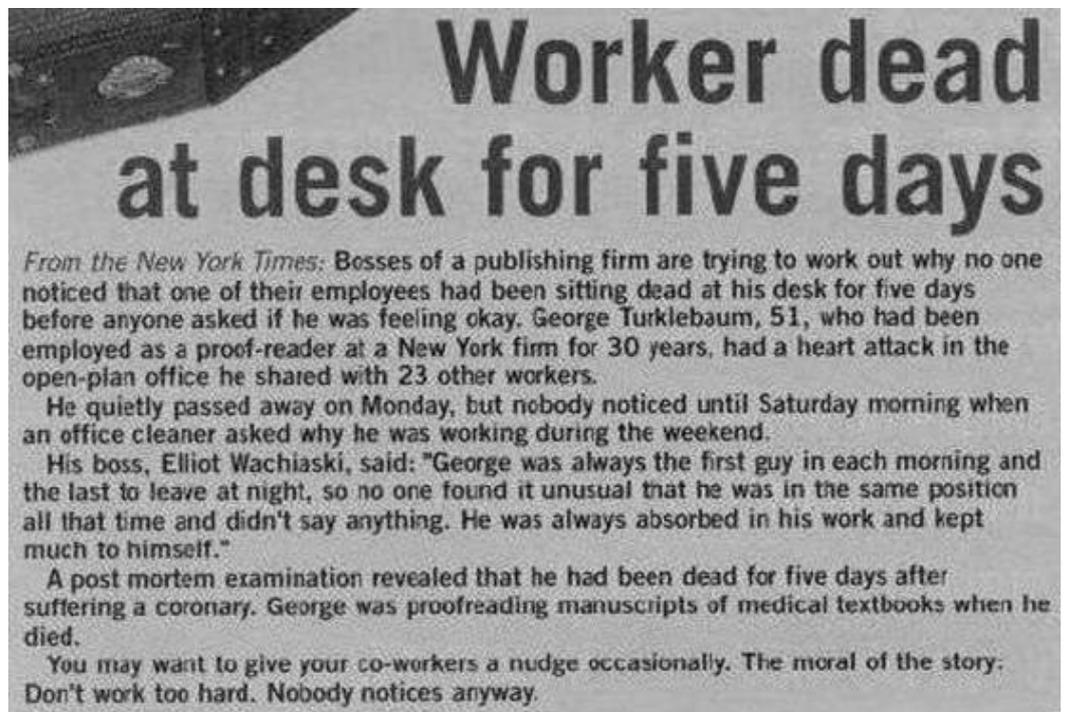
Rob Griffiths

Introducing our New Staff

Karyn Hathaway is an experienced critical care and flight nurse based in Wellington, New Zealand. She is currently a Clinical Charge Nurse in the Intensive Care Unit at Wellington Hospital and Senior Flight Nurse for the Intensive Care Flight Retrieval Service. Karyn has completed postgraduate education in acute and critical care specialities and is the final stages of her Masters of Health Science (AeroRT) at the University of Otago.

Karyn has been flying critically ill and injured patients for over eight years and has moved hundreds of patients in both rotary and fixed wing aircraft. She is the Vice Chairperson of the New Zealand

Flight Nurses Association and is actively involved with developing practice and operational standards, and education for flight nurses. She is the course coordinator for the New Zealand Flight Nurses Course (NZFNA) and has a particular interest in advancing the practice and education of flight nurses and paramedics. Karyn is teaching AVMX719 Aeromedical Studies for Nurses and AVMX720 Critical Analysis in Aeromedical Retrieval and Transport.



Dr Peter Larsen is a cardiovascular scientist who has been working as a senior lecturer in the Department of Surgery and Anaesthesia at the School of Medicine for the last nine years. Prior to that he was doing research at Michigan State University. His research interests centre around cardiac arrest, involving understanding VF mechanism and defibrillation, resuscitation systems and educational issues. In addition to this he has been involved a wide range of other research projects ranging from clinical studies to physiological investigations. Peter has considerable experience in supervising students conducting research from small projects to PhDs, and is interested in fostering and developing research activity within the Aviation Medicine programme.

Residential School

By David Powell

The 2009 Residential School was held in Scotland on 23-30 May, based at the Stirling Management Centre in the grounds of Stirling University. It was organised with huge input from a student, Dr David Peat, from Perth Scotland. We had 26 students, a few “part-time” attendees, several partners/family members, and six members of the Faculty who had a two-day meeting prior to the start of the school.

Dave (“DP2”) and I agreed last year that this would be “The mostly warmly remembered Residential School so far” (we refer to this as the “Gleneagles Agreement”) and it seems that this was what we achieved. It was kicked off with a lovely account by DP2 of some of the history of this region, and a day of various tutorials and lectures before the visit programme began.



The visits were a superb variety: occupational medicine saw heavy shipbuilding at Glasgow, visited an open-cast coal mine and a coal-fired power station, and had a great day at the Royal Air Force’s fighter base at Leuchars, where several students flew the Tornado simulator. The aviation medicine students travelled in company with Aeromedical retrieval and transport to the North to Inverness, visiting the RAF’s search and rescue co-ordination centre at Kinloss, and then on to the Sea King rescue helicopter squadron at RAF Lossiemouth. The group

stayed overnight in Aberdeen and then visited Bond Helicopter’s north sea base, Petrofac off-shore survival training unit, and then a fascinating tour of the National Hyperbaric Centre (including the hyperbaric medicine unit). AeroRT students also visited the Royal Navy’s Sea King operation at HMS Gannet, and aviation medicine had an excellent tour of the Prestwick facility of the National Air Traffic Service. Some AeroRT students also got up early to



have an extra visit to the Scottish Air Ambulance, rewarded by an unplanned rendezvous to see the aircraft landing at a local hospital.



One of the highlights of the academic programme was a tabletop mass casualty exercise in which two teams dealt with a surprisingly realistic simulation of a disaster in an off-shore mine, and had to create and execute evacuation plans using various aeromedical resources. This was a great learning opportunity both for them and for the faculty and volunteers who were running the exercise scenario; we plan to do something of a similar nature on some future residential schools. Later that day Professor John Ernsting, who was our guest for the day, lectured us on some aspects of hypoxia and the pressure cabin as it related particularly to the development of the Concorde operation.

Thanks to Karyn Hathaway for the photos on this page which have been shamelessly plagiarised from her Facebook page!



Dave Peat hands over the cheque for £820 raised at the residential school

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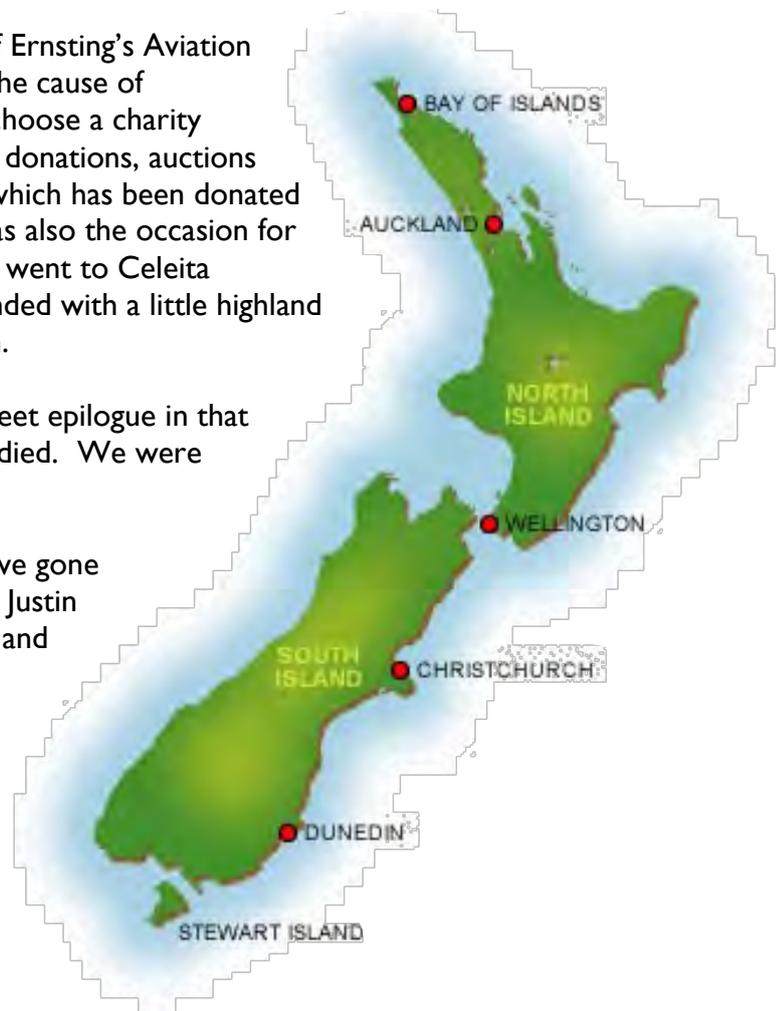
Of course it's not all work, and Scotland provided some wonderful social occasions: early in the week we arrived at the front door of Gleneagles Hotel for drinks and then had a wonderful group dinner in the Gleneagles brasserie "Deseo". Local student Justin Barnes kindly hosted a group for a beautiful dinner at his country home. Several students did a worksite visit of admittedly limited academic value, but immense cultural significance, to a local distillery. The highlight though was undisputedly the final dinner, on a gorgeous spring evening, at Stirling Castle. The group dressed for the occasion (including five men resplendent in Highland dress) and we were piped in to this wonderful vantage point with its commanding view over the historic Stirling region. A guided tour of the venue led us in to our dinner venue around a long table in the Chapel Royal – the piper addressed the haggis, a magnificent meal followed with special tribute paid by Rob to our guest of honour, Professor Ernsting. DP2 was thanked effusively

for his amazing efforts and presented with a copy of Ernsting's Aviation Medicine, and there followed some shenanigans in the cause of fundraising; it has now become a tradition that we choose a charity connected with our school, and from competitions, donations, auctions and the like, this year we raised some 800 pounds which has been donated to the Royal National Lifeboat Association. This was also the occasion for the first awarding of the Nomy Ahmed prize, which went to Celeita Chippendale. A most memorable evening, which ended with a little highland dancing led by our other local student Kitty Duncan.

Of course as you know the occasion had a bittersweet epilogue in that Professor Ernsting took ill just three days later and died. We were truly privileged to hear his last ever lecture.

I can't really think of a way that the school could have gone better, and many many thanks go to the locals DP2, Justin and Kitty, to the Faculty (Rob, Geoff, Pooshan, Tim and Nick) and to many others who made it happen.

Next year's school is already extensively planned with confirmed dates from 26 April to 1 May. I hope you are already making your plans to come to the venue we haven't been to in many years – Auckland, New Zealand!



AVMED Society Mini Conference

Saturday 26 September 2009

Air New Zealand Boardroom

Auckland International Airport

Level 1, Airways Building, Fred Ladd Way

Please reply to sarah.aldington@airnz.co.nz indicating attendance (free for the meeting) +/- dinner (cost NZ\$50)

Mini-conference has been endorsed by RNZCGP and has been approved for up to three hours (= 3 credits) CME for MOPS purposes.

2pm **Dr Karen Willcox** – the astronaut selection process, coordination in zero gravity, and wing design

2.45 **Dr Kira Bacal** – medical problems in space

3.30 Afternoon tea

4.00 **Dr Sarah Aldington** – primary defence against Swine Flu

4.15 **Dr Ben Johnson** – report from Vanuatu conference and update on hypoxia

4.30 **Dr Tim Sprott** - colour vision

4.45 **Dr Dave Baldwin** – how my pilot database reaches unhealthy bastards

5.15 Discussion

5.30 drinks at Butterfly Creek – Papillon café/bar

6.00 dinner – **buffet \$50 – alcohol not included.**

Dr Karen Willcox graduated Bachelor of Engineering Auckland 1993 then travelled to the USA to complete a Ph.D. at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Aeronautics and Astronautics. She then spent time working at NASA Dryden, where NASA flight testing takes place and at Boeing with the Blended-Wing-Body aircraft design team. She is now an Assistant-Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics at the MIT computational design laboratory involved in wing flow design and reducing airframe noise. Over the last year she has been working a sabbatical at Auckland University and was shortlisted in the last 40 although her application as an astronaut unfortunately was not successful this time.



Dr Kira Bacal MD PhD FPHP FACEP has been Assistant-Prof Dept of Preventive Medicine and Community Health in Houston Texas, also Assistant Prof Dept of Emergency Medicine Ohio with degrees in emergency medicine, public health, aerospace medicine and interests in bioterrorism and trauma care. She worked at NASA and Wyle developing protocols for space emergencies and more recently at Mauri Ora Assoc, Herne Bay improving health care to culturally diverse groups and is now working at the Waitakere Hospital emergency dept.



Scholarship Opportunity

We would like to draw your attention to the Scholarship of the International Academy of Aviation and Space Medicine. The Academy has a well-established Scholarship Programme, the aims of which are to enable young physicians commencing a career in aerospace medicine to undertake training in the specialty. The Scholarship can be used to facilitate attendance at a formal training course, or participation in a work programme (one year or more, structured towards educational goals) in a recognized aerospace medicine institute. The scholarship is for US \$15,000. If you are interested in applying, further details are available from the Academy website <http://www.iaasm.org/>

facebook On the Internet...

After requests from students from this programme and other areas of the University we have set up Facebook pages for staff as well as more actively supporting the groups already there. Some of you will have got requests to be our friends and there is already quite a bit of activity going on, so if you are a Facebook user please befriend us. Find us at...

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/katherineharris.universityotago?ref=name> — Katherine

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/profile.php?id=1152885432&ref=sgm> — Rob

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/profile.php?id=100000258691105> — Julie

... and then you can check out our friends to find other staff and students

We have also started a research group at <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=148060127742> and there is a Remote Library Services page at <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=125122443995>

Don't forget our existing sites for aviation medicine — <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=13867522094>, occupational medicine — <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=11825235947> and aeromedical retrieval and transport — <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=11825235947#/group.php?gid=6084903546>

Dates for your Diary...

26 September 2009	Air New Zealand Mini Conference
30 September 2009	ISAS Conference—Tasmania www.isas.org.au
21 October 2009	AVMX714 and 716 exams
28 October 2009	AVMX724 exam
4 November 2009	AVMX718 and 722 exams
10 December 2009	New student enrolments close
12 December 2009	Graduation Day
15 January 2010	Returning student enrolments close
31 March 2010	Last date to withdraw from semester one papers with refund of fees
26 April—1 May 2010	Residential School in Auckland
22 May 2010	Graduation Day
16 June 2010	AVMX exam date*
23 June 2010	AVMX exam back-up day*
8-11 September 2010	ISAS Conference—Christchurch www.isas2010.co.nz
27 October 2010	AVMX exam back-up day*
3 November 2010	AVMX exam date*

* We have confirmed dates for the exams for next year to help students plan. The second date will be used if there is a need for two dates, for example when we have a student sitting more than one exam in a semester. So please pencil in both dates to be on the safe side.



KILLER BISCUITS WANTED FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER

(the actual AP headline)

Lisa Burnett, 23, a resident of San Diego, was visiting her in-laws, and while there went to a nearby supermarket to pick up some groceries. Several people noticed her sitting in her car with the windows rolled up and with her eyes closed, with both hands behind the back of her head. One customer who had been at the store for a while became concerned and walked over to the car. He noticed that Lisa's eyes were now open, and she looked very strange. He asked her if she was okay, and Lisa replied that she'd been shot in the back of the head, and had been holding her brains in for over an hour. The man called the paramedics, who broke into the car because the doors were locked and Lisa refused to remove her hands from her head. When they finally got in, they found that Lisa had a wad of bread dough on the back of her head... A Pillsbury biscuit canister had exploded from the heat, making loud noise that sounded like a gunshot, and the wad of dough hit her in the back of her head. When she reached back to find out what it was, she felt the dough and thought it was her brains. She initially passed out, but quickly recovered and tried to hold her brains in for over an hour until someone noticed and came to her aid. Lisa is blonde.

failblog.org

FAIL





Quotes from New Zealand Rugby

Just to get you in the mood for your time in New Zealand next year, some quotes from our sportspeople...

"Nobody in rugby should be called a genius. A genius is a guy like Norman Einstein." - (Jono Gibbs - Chiefs)

"You guys line up alphabetically by height." and "You guys pair up in groups of three, then line up in a circle." - (Colin Cooper - Hurricanes' head coach)

Chris Masoe (Hurricanes) on whether he had visited the pyramids during his visit to Egypt : "I can't really remember the names of the clubs that we went to."

"He's a guy who gets up at six o'clock in the morning regardless of what time it is." - Colin Cooper

Kevin Senio (Auckland), on night rugby vs day games: "It's basically the same, just darker."

David Nucifora (Auckland): "I told him, 'Son, what is it with you. Is it ignorance or apathy?' He said, 'David, I don't know and I don't care'."

David Holwell (Hurricanes) when asked about the upcoming season: "I want to reach for 150 or 200 points this season, whichever comes first."

"Colin has done a bit of mental arithmetic with a calculator." (Ma'a Nonu)

"We actually got the winning try three minutes from the end but then they scored." (Phil Waugh-Waratahs)

"I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body." (Jerry Collins)

"That kick was absolutely unique, except for the one before it which was identical." (Tony Brown)

"I owe a lot to my parents, especially my mother and father." (Tana Umaga)

"Sure there have been injuries and deaths in rugby, but none of them serious." (Doc Mayhew)

"If history repeats itself, I should think we can expect the same thing again." (Anton Oliver)

"I never comment on referees and I'm not going to break the habit of a lifetime for that prat." (Ewan McKenzie)

"Well, either side could win it, or it could be a draw." (Murray Mexted)

"Strangely, in slow motion replay, the ball seemed to hang in the air for even longer." (Murray Mexted)

That's all from us for this time. Please send us anything you would like to share for the next issue of AvGas which will come out in February or March 2010.



Locum and Full-time Medical Appointments



JTA International is an international company that specialises in health. We provide a comprehensive range of services from policy to service delivery in the public and private sectors to contribute to long-term benefits for clients and communities.

Our continued growth has resulted in us seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified and experienced GP's, Physicians and Career Medical Officers to join our health services teams in rural and remote environments both domestically and internationally.

One such opportunity with our international projects is the provision of health services to Ok Tedi Mining Limited and the surrounding community at Tabubil Hospital, Western Province, Papua New Guinea. We have a permanent opportunity for an expatriate medical doctor from 2010 and locum opportunities throughout the year. These positions will involve providing services to an expatriate and national population. Further responsibilities will include:

- Providing inpatient and outpatient primary care
- Emergency medical response and treatment
- Contributing towards the maintenance of professional standards for clinical services personnel
- Providing medical advice to the hospital administrator in relation to other services, specifications of equipment and drugs and medical supplies
- Acting as the point of liaison with JTA on any medical issues

Successful candidates will have:

- Current medical registration in Australia, New Zealand, The United Kingdom or South Africa, or an ability to be fully registered in one of these countries
- At least five years post graduation clinical experience
- Experience working in a rural or remote area
- Interest in international development would be an advantage
- Cross cultural understanding and experience
- Interest in public health, tropical medicine and occupational health and safety
- Experience in Accident and Emergency medicine as well as Paediatrics will be highly regarded

Our positions are well remunerated and offer attractive benefits

For further information, or to express an interest in these positions, please visit our website: www.jtai.com.au

If you would like to learn more about other opportunities within the region, please contact our **Executive Recruitment Advisor, Clare Woolsey** on +61 7 3114 4639 or clare.woolsey@jtai.com.au.

World Health. We're working on it.