

1+1= A Healthy Start to Life Research Update No 2 December 2007

Where the research is at

Our researchers are all becoming increasingly clear about the direction their studies will take over the coming years. Sarah Bar Zeev, Suzanne Belton, Sue Kildea, Sue Kruske and Lesley Barclay and have made preliminary visits to the Maningrida and Wadeye fieldsites for meetings with women and Health Centre staff. Suzanne's visit to Wadeye for 3 days in September oriented her to the community and she spent time at Fossil Head outstation and Palumpa township. She met Health Centre staff and re-connected with the Indigenous women who came to Darwin for our initial workshop to set the research agenda in May 2006. She was able to walk about town and watch the daily activities and visit various amenities and services. She also was able to spend time with Sarah Ireland, who is starting an Honours project associated with the 1+1 research agenda. Suzanne looks forward to more field work in February.

Terry Dunbar's fieldwork has started with visits to Coburg and Galiwinku. She is now on a second fieldtrip to Galiwinku with Elaine Lawurrpa Maypilama working out of the Yalu Marngithinyaraw (Nurturing Centre). Elaine been employed to work on project and has been arranging conversations with Yolngu women about the study. Terry has also contacted Larrakia women through the Study's Indigenous Reference Group and is organising a further trip to Croker Island and Jabiru to visit relatives in 2008.

Sarah Bar Zeev has been awarded a \$2500 scholarship from the Australian College of Midwives for her PhD research and conference presentation at the National Australian College of Midwives Conference (presented in September in Canberra).

New researcher joins the team

Lorna Murakami-Gold – has recently joined the Graduate School of Health Practice and is an experienced nurse with a Bachelor of Teaching and a Masters in Adult Education. Lorna will be undertaking a project which will be practical, outcomes based and involve community participation in an urban and remote Indigenous setting. She is currently enrolling in a PhD and seeking ethics approval.



Sarah Ireland, researcher and Health Centre staff member at Wadeye, talks with Dymphna Kungal.

Team success with research grant proposals

Our researchers and colleagues from Menzies School of Health Research, the School for Social and Policy Research at CDU and universities and institutions elsewhere in Australia have been awarded a spate of research grants in recent funding rounds. The studies are directly related to or will inform aspects of our main *1+1 = A Healthy Start to Life* research agenda.

~~~Assoc Professor Sue Kildea Graduate School for Health Practice at CDU and Chief Investigator on *1+1* and Dr Jacquie Boyle from Menzies and Associate Investigator on *1+1* are Chief Investigators with Dr Alice Rumbold from Menzies, Dr Robyn Thompson (CDU) and Professor Euan Wallace from Monash University Medical School in an NHMRC grant (\$360,000) which will investigate the views of Aboriginal women, their families and their health service providers about antenatal screening for fetal anomalies such as Down Syndrome and neural tube defects. Presently there is low uptake of screening and if changes were introduced to the screening process then uptake may improve.

~~~Assoc Professor Sue Kildea and Assoc. Professor Sally Tracy, University Technology Sydney (UTS) and Chief Investigators on the *1+1*, have joined with Professor Michael Chapman UNSW and St George Hospital Sydney, Professor Michael Peek University of Sydney and Nepean Hospital, Dr Mark Tracy UNSW, University of Sydney and Nepean Hospital and Professor Caroline Homer (UTS) on an NHMRC grant (\$572,000) to undertake a randomised controlled trial of caseload midwifery care.

~~~Professor Lesley Barclay, Chief Investigator and Project Leader for *1+1*, with Assoc Professor Tess Lea from CDU and Dr Kate Senior from Menzies have been awarded an ARC Linkage Grant with The Smith Family as partner (\$180,000) to investigate the challenges faced by parents whose children are not coming to school, misbehaving or failing academically. The results will be used by the Smith Family to inform their work in early intervention for children who are at risk of educational failure and will benefit remote and rural communities to help them determine what factors contribute to a successful and vibrant school community.

~~~Professor Lesley Barclay with Professor Debra Creedy and Dr Jenny Gamble from Griffith University Brisbane, Assoc Professor Jenny Fenwick, Curtin University Technology and King Edward Memorial Hospital Perth, Professor Anne Buist, University of Melbourne and Austin Health and

Northpark Private Hospital Melbourne, and Assoc Prof Luckman Thalib, Kuwait University Medical School, were successful in an NHMRC grant (\$649,450) to study the effects of a midwife-led counselling have intervention to improve postpartum women's mental health.

Chief Investigator, Professor Jonathan Carapetis, named as Territorian of the Year.

Chief Investigator on the 1+1 Project and Director of Menzies School of Health Research, Jonathan Carapetis, claimed top honours when he was named as the NT Australian of the Year. A Territorian who has dedicated his life to the health profession, Professor Carapetis was presented with the top honour by Chief Minister Clare Martin in a reception at Parliament House on 16 November. Professor Carapetis has been involved with Menzies for more than 10 years with his ground-breaking research leading to the creation of Australia's first rheumatic heart disease control program.

Developing Indigenous pathways to higher education and a Bachelor of Midwifery

The Graduate School for Health Practice has won over \$200,000 in a competitive tender to develop a Bachelor of Midwifery targeted at Aboriginal students. The 'Indigenous Pathways to Midwifery' project provides opportunities for Aboriginal women with non traditional academic backgrounds to build academic skills and confidence to succeed in tertiary study. It will also develop a Bachelor of Midwifery curriculum, the first in the NT. The project will accelerate Aboriginal professional development opportunities and provide for skilled clinical leadership from Aboriginal women in maternity care. Funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training as part of the Cross Sectoral Lighthouse Project the successful projects aim to increase participation of Indigenous students in higher education. 'Indigenous Pathways to Midwifery' involves collaboration between Charles Darwin University, the NT Department of Health and

Community Services, Danila Dilba, the Larrakia Nation, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Training and Education and the Australian College of Midwives

The project will directly address long standing midwifery skills shortages and address these in rural and remote Australia, where they are most acute and where the outcomes of poor standard health care are most seriously felt

Chief Investigator Associate Professor Sue Kildea contributes to WHO discussions in Geneva

Sue Kildea, Associate Professor of Midwifery at CDU, was one of those invited to a three-day Technical Consultation with more than 30 experts from six WHO regions representing scientific institutions, non-governmental organizations, professional bodies, UN agencies including UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank, and other development partners. Delegates discussed how to increase coverage with skilled health professionals for maternity care. The disciplines of midwifery, obstetrics, paediatrics, public health, epidemiology, anaesthetics, health policy, education, human resources and health systems worked together to provide guidance on the workforce issues challenging maternal and newborn health



Sue in Geneva in November 2007.