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November 2008 – February 2009

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What’s New

• On 1 January 2009, the Australian Health Policy Institute and the Menzies Centre for Health Policy amalgamated and will now be known as the Menzies Centre for Health Policy. The Institute and Centre have worked side by side for the last three years and we believe the merged Centre will have strength in numbers, output and an improved national focus. The Menzies Centre will continue to operate as a joint venture between the University of Sydney and Australian National University. The expanded Centre was officially launched on 17 February by Lynette Glendenning, Judith Whitworth and Stephen Leeder.

• A website is being developed that will incorporate all Menzies Centre for Health Policy content and information previously provided on the Australian Health Policy Institute website. The website will be a key tool for communicating our work to colleagues and the community.

• The Diabetes Unit, a group that operated as part of the Australian Health Policy Institute, has been welcomed as a unit of the Menzies Centre for Health Policy. The Director of the Diabetes Unit is Associate Professor Ruth Colagiuri. Further details about the work of The Diabetes Unit are provided in this report.

• The Menzies Centre for Health Policy held a planning day in February 2009 to reflect on past achievements and discuss future directions for the Menzies Centre. Staff and colleagues from both the Australian National University and University of Sydney nodes of the Menzies Centre attended the meeting. In addition several senior researchers and policy experts independent of the Menzies Centre participated and added their invaluable insights.

• Joel Negin is a lecturer in international health policy and will be working 1 day/week at the Menzies Centre. Joel teaches Foundations of International Health, Global Perspectives on HIV/AIDS and Health Systems in Developing Countries at the University of Sydney School of Public Health. His main research interests include human resources, health systems and health financing to ensure universal access to services. Joel has extensive experience managing health and development projects and working on health policy issues in sub-Saharan Africa. He was the Health Coordinator for Professor Jeffrey Sachs’ Millennium Villages Project, a multi-sectoral development project in 14 sites in ten African countries and earlier worked as Technical Adviser to the director of Kenya's National AIDS Control Council focusing on management, policy and capacity building.

• Links with the primary care sector were strengthened with the appointment of Robert Wells as Director of the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute at the Australian National University alongside his Menzies Centre directorship.
Research

Research is a core activity of the Menzies Centre for Health Policy. Menzies Centre staff collaborate extensively with government agencies, area health services, non-government organisations, independent institutes and with industry, locally and internationally, on a wide range of research and consultancy projects. Staff at the Menzies Centre mentor and supervise research students enrolled at both The Australian National University and the University of Sydney. The Menzies Centre also hosts academic and students visitors pursuing projects that align with the research strengths and interests of Menzies Centre staff.

Successful grant award

Stephen Leeder is a chief investigator on a recently awarded $1.8M NHMRC Capacity Building Grant that will use health economics to strengthen ties between evidence, policy and practice in chronic diseases. Steve will work with colleagues at The George Institute for International Health and the School of Public Health on a broad ranging health economics research program that cuts across and adds value to a range of studies including a number of population-based observational studies, clinical trials and evaluations of health service interventions.

Grant Applications


- An NHMRC Partnership grant application was submitted in December 2008: Leeder SR, Boyages S, Adelstein B, Aspin C, Gillespie J, Jan S, Kelly P, Sheridan J, Usherwood T. Evaluating Care Navigation to improve the management and health of patients with complex chronic illness: A randomised controlled trial. Total grant budget: $2.63M.

- A new NHMRC Project Grant application is in preparation: Gopinath B, McMahon C, Usherwood T, Rochtchina E, Schneider J. Enhancing the Role of General Practitioners in Managing Age-Related Hearing Loss. Total grant budget: $562,439.

- Stephen Leeder is listed as a CI on an NHMRC project grant application that will support a health complaint management system in Vietnam.

- Stephen Leeder is listed as an AI on an NHMRC project grant application that will investigate CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) and snoring.

Visitors

- Steven Lewis will be visiting the Menzies Centre for Health Policy from 2 to 27 March. He has been a health planner, health research granting agency administrator, health services researcher and research director, and independent health policy and research consultant since 1974. He has been awarded a Menzies Centre for Health Policy Fellowship and will work with the Centre to generate new research ideas, projects and connections with the Centre.
• Professor Gur Ofer will be visiting the Menzies Centre from 9 March to 17 April. He is a professor of Economics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In addition to extensive work on the Soviet Economy, he has worked and published in the areas of the welfare state and health economics in Israel and other countries. During 1995-2008 he served as the head of the Israel National Institute for Health Policy and Health Services Research. Whilst in Australia, Professor Ofer hopes to interact with domestic scholars and learn about the Australian healthcare system while at the same time sharing his knowledge of comparative healthcare systems. His most recent research covered different aspects of the public-private mix in the predominantly public Israeli healthcare system. Professor Ofer will be a key speaker at a seminar that will be held in Canberra, ‘European social insurance: a model for the future of Australian health care?’.

• The Menzies Centre for Health Policy is hosting a WHO Fellow in 2009. Xie Dongfang who has been awarded a Fellowship to work on a supervised ‘Health Technology Assessment’ research project under the supervision of Stephen Leeder and Masoud Mirzaei. The research project will have a special focus on applicability within the context of the Chinese health system.

Research Students

• Menzies Centre staff now supervise 10 PhD students (Leeder 4 students and Gillespie 3 students as principal supervisor; Gillespie 3 students as associate supervisor).

• A new honours student will commence in 2009 under the supervision of Masoud Mirzaei.

Current projects

Blue Mountains Eye and Hearing Study

The Blue Mountains Eye Study (BMES) was the first large population-based assessment of visual impairment and common eye diseases of a representative older Australian community sample. A subsequent study conducted by the BMES research team included detailed hearing assessment performed by audiologists, giving a more comprehensive picture of sensory functioning in older Australians. Dr Julie Schneider works as a postdoctoral researcher supported by an NHMRC capacity building research grant to identify the health policy implications of the survey data. An NHMRC Partnership Grant application with Vision Australia and Audiology Australia was submitted in December 2008 to continue Julie’s work. If successful, the project will pilot an integrated, collaborative service model for assessment and rehabilitation of dual sensory impairment in older people.

IC-Health

With research funding from the Initiative for Cardiovascular Health Research in the Developing Countries (IC-Health), Stephen Leeder has continued to work on the economic consequences of cardiovascular disease and the translation of these economic insights into effective preventive and control strategies through the recruitment of industry, labour and treasury and finance ministers from developing countries.

In November Stephen Leeder travelled to Hyderabad India to address a meeting about the global impact of diabetes. From Hyderabad he went to Delhi to consult with colleagues at IC-Health to discuss a study of the
microeconomic consequences in families of people admitted to hospital in the previous two years for heart
disease. This study is being carried out in centres in China, India, Argentina and Tanzania.

Steve also chaired the first of two days of a meeting in India in February 2009, under the auspices of the IC-
Health. Since the last meeting in 2008, progress on this study has been impressive, with each of the centres except Tanzania now having completed their data collection and preliminary data analysis. The family studies are being supplemented by an elegant review of the cost effectiveness of various CVD preventive interventions in developing countries.

Menzies Centre for Health Policy Nous Group Survey

The Second Report of the Menzies Centre for Health Policy Nous Group Survey of Attitudes to the
Australian Health System ‘Financial Stress and Health Care’ was released in February
There was widespread media reporting of the survey results.

Miscellaneous

• Stephen Leeder attended the APRU-AWI Public Health workshop in Singapore in November. APRU, the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, which includes 42 institutions including the University of Sydney, held a meeting to establish a plan for collaborative research that might contribute to the alleviation of the growing epidemics of non-communicable disease, including cardiovascular disease in the region. Global warming (led from the University of Melbourne) and non-communicable disease (led by the National University of Singapore) are the two research topics that the presidents and vice chancellors of the APRU members have settled upon to support and establish as the principal activities of the APRU World Institute. There was an excellent spirit abroad among research workers from China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Vietnam and the US. There was broad agreement that we should focus on operational research – how to change and implement policies that promote better health in relation to NCDs – rather than on basic or aetiological research. Several interesting major cohort studies were alluded to in China, though it is not immediately obvious how these will contribute to our overall goal, though they are very well connected within the political structure of APRU. The next meeting will be in February 2009 in San Francisco.

• In early February Stephen Leeder visited Delhi as a member of an advisory group, chaired by Jeff
Sachs from the Earth Institute, consulting for the Indian federal minister of health and his department on the roll-out of the Rural Health Mission, a multimillion dollar program designed to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality among poorer Indian communities. It is now in its fifth year and is progressing well. Other members of the review team included ministers for health from Rwanda, Malawi and Kenya. They added a substantial dimension to the discussions, comparing and contrasting the Indian and African experiences in rural health. Africa now has nearly 1 billion population and the bonds with India are developing.

• Lesley Russell and Clive Aspin are working together to deliver strategic policy advice and guidance to the Chair of the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council.
Lesley Russell is working with the Clinical Oncology Society of Australia to develop an economic analysis of the value of investment in regional cancer centres, and to offer strategic advice on presenting this analysis to the Commonwealth Government.

Lesley Russell is working with Dr Catherine Hawkins, Northern Rivers Rural Medical School, to expand a research project on pharmacists’ role in managing chronic disease to Orange.

Interviews have now been completed with 10 pharmacists on issues around how they manage patient compliance and continuance with their PBS medicines. Lesley is currently analysing transcripts and exploring publication opportunities for a paper that will be a qualitative analysis with policy recommendations.

Lesley Russell is working with Anna Hynd (UWA / Sax Institute) to get access to data on PBS medicines that cost less than the copayment, and thus do not show up in Medicare Australia data as there is no cost to the government.

In January 2009 James Gillespie was invited to Singapore to attend the Pandemic Preparedness in Asia Conference, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He presented a paper on Multi Drug Resistant Tuberculosis and the Securitization of Illness: Australia and Papua New Guinea, at a seminar on "Perspectives on Biosecurity", Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies also at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore.

Research - Serious and Continuing Illness Policy and Practice Study (SCIPPS)

SCIPPS Management

A SCIPPS Management Meeting took place on 3 December in Bowral. Members from both sites met to discuss the progress of the project and to discuss the way forward. The next meeting of both sites will be at the Strategic Direction Meeting to be held in Canberra on 17 March. This will provide an opportunity for all SCIPPS team members, including Chief Investigators and Associate Investigators to agree on the strategic direction of the project over the next two and a half years. Importantly, this meeting will inform the work program of the project in line with the agreed strategic direction.

Grant Application

A partnership grant application has been submitted to the NHMRC. SCIPPS Sydney has developed a proposal to conduct a randomised control trial of Care Navigation at Sydney West Area Health Service in partnership with investigators at SWAHS. Care Navigation is a coordinated care package for people with chronic illness that is being developed and implemented by SWAHS. If successful, this project will run an RCT comparing this new program with the standard care program that is currently available in SWAHS. Total grant application budget is $2.63M.
Papers in preparation

A number of papers from the qualitative study are currently nearing finalisation and will be ready for submission to journals in time for the strategic planning meeting in March. Papers in preparation focus on:

- Health services and chronic illness;
- Achieving a balanced life in order to manage chronic illness;
- Health literacy and chronic illness;
- Health care professionals and the management of chronic illness;
- The impact of poor access to transport on people with chronic illness;
- The role of carers in the management of chronic illness;
- Co-morbidity;
- A comparison of Australian and New Zealand health policy responses to co-morbid chronic illness.

Preliminary planning is underway for the second round of papers. A more refined process will be developed to ensure that papers are written and submitted in a timely fashion. The end of 2009 has been identified as a suitable time by which this round of papers should be completed.

Work in progress

- Translation of research findings into policy relevant interventions. The purpose of the interventions is to develop and test policy and systems interventions that would be able to add to the evidence available to policy makers in the design of chronic illness models.

- Evaluation project with The Canberra Hospital on the Chronic Illness Co-ordination program which will be linked to the operational evaluation of the project. The SCIPPS project will look at the impact of the intervention from the perspectives of the clinical staff with whom the co-ordinators have worked, the co-ordinators, and the people who are enrolled in the program. The project will also look at a linked data study to identify the pattern of whole system use for this group of people, looking back some years to see what patterns may have emerged in their use of services; and a root cause analysis of the pathway to admission for the people enrolled in the program, for which ethics approval is being prepared.

- Support for diabetes management in general practice, where SCIPPS will be involved in the evaluation of a pilot project in which specialist endocrinologist and nursing staff will work with general practices to test whether this is a potential option for testing on a wider scale. The lead clinician with the interest in this study is working on identifying interested practices.

- Development of a study using the 45 and up data set to explore patterns of service utilisation by people with cardiac disease and/or diabetes, and the links between those patterns, particularly the use of the Medicare items relating to the management of chronic illness, and health outcomes. An initial bid for access to the data has been submitted so that the full costs of the project can be determined.

- Discussions with ACT Health have continued about the involvement of SCIPPS in the evaluation of aspects of the Chronic Disease Strategy, but no further commitments have been identified.

- A survey study of GPs to explore the ‘no symptoms- no disease’ hypothesis. Practice experience suggests that for many patients the lack of frank symptoms of the disease leads to a belief that the
disease has ‘gone away’ and may lead to less than optimal management. This project is underway and participants are being recruited to the study.

- Studies in the Sydney arm of the project include working with the one stop “Health One” project in Mt Druitt, where SCIPPS is negotiating with HOMD to develop an evaluation of the project.
- The first stage design for three policy studies is being worked up by Robert Wells, Jim Gillespie, Paul Dugdale and Laurann Yen.

**Education**

*One of the principal objectives of the Centre includes training researchers to such a level that they will have the capacity to participate meaningfully in national and international research programs on health policy and to undertake research training activities and programs that are consistent with these objectives. The Menzies Centre has provided a focus for expanding postgraduate programs in health policy at the University of Sydney and a new Master of Public Health program at the Australian National University.*

- The Master of Health Policy program is being offered in 2009 at the University of Sydney, the first program of its kind in Australia. The program has a national profile – drawing students from the ACT, Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland and NSW. Jim Gillespie, Stephen Leeder, Lesley Russell and Masoud Mirzaei contribute to this teaching program. The program is also taught in association with the Sax Institute (NSW Health) and the George Institute for International Health.
- Baxter Healthcare has confirmed support for a $9,720 University of Sydney student scholarship in 2009. This scholarship will support 50% of the Master of Health Policy course fee.
- The Australian National University will be offering a Master of Public Health from 2009. Robert Wells is coordinating a health policy subject in the program.

**Health Policy Analyses and Commentary**

*Reports from the National Hospitals Reform Commission and Preventative Taskforce are due in 2009. A major infrastructure program will be announced for health and other reviews such as the Maternity Services Review will generate rich dialogue about health policy. The Menzies Centre will play an important contributor of evidence and commentary in these debates.*

- Lesley Russell worked on a Review of Government Mental Health Initiatives Across Australian Jurisdictions, commissioned by the National Advisory Council on Mental Health. The report has been completed and is currently being circulated. Further updates of this report in 2009 have been commissioned, and John Mendoza (Chair, NACMH) has a meeting to present the findings to the Minister for Health. A significant amount of this material will be able to be included on the Menzies Centre website.
- Lesley Russell was an invited participant in the Sydney consultation meeting on the National Preventative Health Taskforce’s discussion paper “Australia: the healthiest country by 2020”.
- Lesley Russell was invited to a Department of Health and Ageing briefing on the ABS 2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing.
Lesley Russell has completed analyses of:
- Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2008-09;
- COAG spending in health care announced November 2008;
- Chronic Disease Management program 2007-08; and
- MBS items for GP case conferencing.

Stephen Leeder has been invited to join the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing Health and Hospitals Fund Advisory Board. In the 2008-09 Budget, the Commonwealth Government committed to establishing the Health and Hospitals Fund to provide a financing source for future health infrastructure priorities. The Commonwealth Government has committed $5 billion to the Fund from the 2007-08 surplus and additional funds may be committed from future surpluses. Spending proposals will be assessed by the Health and Hospitals Fund Advisory Board with the objectives to: invest in major health infrastructure programs that will make significant progress towards achieving the Commonwealth's health reform targets; and make strategic investments in the health system that will underpin major improvements in efficiency, access or outcomes of health care.

Stephen Leeder has been invited to chair the Sydney West Area Health Service Review of Research and Education.

Robert Wells is working with the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technical Societies on a submission to a Senate Inquiry into gene patenting.

The Diabetes Unit

The Diabetes Unit is a primarily self-funded entity established at the Australian Health Policy Institute in June 2005 as a new iteration of its predecessor, the Australian Centre for Diabetes Strategies which was located at the Prince of Wales Hospital - University of New South Wales. The Diabetes Unit augments and complements the Menzies Centre's existing strengths and supports its strategic direction by:

- Establishing and maintaining an Oxford Health Alliance presence and focus of activity for the Asia-Pacific Region;
- Pursuing activities in health services research and development, population health improvement, and generating or synthesising the evidential and consensual base on which policy for the prevention and care of diabetes and related chronic diseases can be founded.

Due to the appointment, in mid 2008, of the Director, Associate Professor Ruth Colagiuri, as leader of the Health Theme for the University's new Institute for Sustainable Solutions, The Diabetes Unit has been able to increase its focus on chronic disease prevention and the link between the causes and consequences of chronic diseases and aspects of climate change, and ways in which these might be addressed as an integrated 'package'.

The Diabetes Unit conceptualises its role as a conduit between thinking and doing (theory and practice). Its approach is pragmatic and cognisant of the multiplicity of needs, perspectives and forces prevailing across all levels of society, so that its work is a bridge between academia, the broader chronic disease community, and civil society.
Projects

Type 2 Diabetes NHMRC Guidelines

The Diabetes Unit is subcontracted to, and partners with, Diabetes Australia to lead and manage the development and updating of four evidence based NHMRC guidelines for diabetes. The contract covers updating the evidence for two existing guidelines (primary prevention and case detection and diagnosis) approved by the NHMRC in the early 2000s and the development of two new guidelines – renal disease and patient education. The NHMRC Draft Guidelines for Renal Disease in Type 2 diabetes was submitted to the NHMRC for independent review following public consultation. The Patient Education Guideline has just completed public consultation and is currently being prepared for return to the NHMRC to be put out to independent review for the Diabetes Foundation.

The World Diabetes Foundation Pacific Islands Capacity Building Project

The Diabetes Unit is working with the Ministry of Health in Vanuatu and Nauru to design, implement and report on a locally relevant and sustainable model to increase the capacity of these Pacific Island countries to manage, monitor and improve diabetes care and reduce eye, kidney and foot complications resulting from diabetes. While this is primarily a clinically oriented project, it has a broader focus on the organisation and systems underpinning clinical care – workforce, clinical governance, information systems, and the cost of care. Therefore this has implications for both policy and practice in developing countries. The evaluation phase of this project is just beginning and the final Australian clinical team visits are underway. In-country project staff are commencing the follow up cost of illness and amputation root cause analysis surveys for the final evaluation.

IDF Task Force on National Diabetes Policy & Action

As part of the implementation of the UN Resolution, the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) has established a Task Force on National Diabetes Policy and Action to promote and support the implementation of national diabetes programs (NDPs) and strategies globally. Development of a policy and practice handbook on national diabetes policy and programs for global distribution through the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) is in progress.

Oxford Health Alliance (OxHA)

The Diabetes Unit plays an important advocacy role, both nationally and internationally, stimulating and fostering action across a range of sectors in response to the challenges of epidemic chronic disease. It is in this role that The Diabetes Unit leads the Oxford Health Alliance Asia-Pacific Centre, building and maintaining a network of activity with people committed to the improvement of the health environment and organisations whose business influences health. An Oxford Dialogue on Advertising and Sustainability was hosted by The Diabetes Unit in late 2008. A report of the meeting has been prepared and negotiations are underway with participants to obtain permission to circulate this report more widely.
Grant Applications

- Ruth Colagiuri has submitted a grant application to the World Diabetes Foundation for 3 years funding for a project, Dealing with Diabetes: Building Sustainability Through Health in the Solomon Islands.

- A funding proposal has been submitted for a Root Cause Analysis of Acute Hospital Admissions For People With Chronic Diseases to the current round of Perpetual Trust Grant process.

- Ruth Colagiuri has submitted a concept paper and request for funding to the Parliamentary Secretary for the Pacific Islands, Mr Duncan Kerr, for a workshop to converse and consult with Ministries of Health from Pacific Island countries about the utility of addressing chronic disease prevention and aspects of climate change as an integrated package.

- Ruth Colagiuri is preparing a University of Sydney Medical Foundation grant application for addressing chronic diseases and aspects of sustainability and climate change in Pacific Island countries as an integrated intervention package.

- Ruth Colagiuri and Stephen Leeder have submitted a proposal for seed funding for an Urban Health Index in response to the University of Sydney Institute for Sustainable Solutions request for EOIs.

Publications and Presentations

Peer Reviewed Papers


- Mirzaei M, Truswell S, Taylor R, Leeder SR. Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) epidemics: not all the same, Heart. 2008 Dec 18. [Epub ahead of print]


MENZIES CENTRE FOR HEALTH POLICY


Reports and Discussion Papers


- Hynd A & Russell L. Recession and depression; an analysis of the effect of co-payment increases on the use of PBS depression medications. February 2009. This paper was the subject of an opinion piece and a news article for the Health section of The Australian, 28 February 2009.


- Russell L. An updated analysis of the Medicare Better Access mental health program. February 2009. This paper was presented to the National Advisory Council on Mental Health at their February meeting. The Chair of the NACMH discussed the results with the Minister for Health.


Conference Abstracts


• Aspin C. Chronic illness in Australia: Insights from SCIPPS. Presentation at the Centre for Chronic Disease Management, School of Public Health, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. 20 November, 2008.


**Industry Publications**

• Russell L. Give advisory bodies the authority to drive reform. Medical Observer, 28 November 2008.

• Leeder SR. Padding the Pacific, Australian Doctor, 14 January 2009.


• Leeder SR. Rising Ocean Tides and Obesity May Sink South Pacific Islands, intouch, 2 March 2009

**Media/ Public Engagement**


• Russell L. Why health will be a headache for Obama. Crikey, 20 January 2009.


• Russell L. Trachoma, a tragedy that cries out for intervention. Canberra Times, 30 January 2009.

• Robert Wells contributed two feature articles to Crikey around the Interim Report of the National Hospitals and Health Reform Commission released on 16 February 2009.

• Leeder S. ‘Health’s chance in a sick economy’ Sydney Morning Herald 17 February 2009.

• Russell L. Health care not quite what the doctor ordered. Canberra Times, 18 February 2009.


**Menzies in the News**


• Labor health advisory body overload, Australian Doctor, 21 November 2008. Professor Stephen Leeder and Dr Lesley Russell are quoted in this article.

• Target Practice, Medical Observer, 6 February 2009. Stephen Leeder and Robert Wells are quoted in this article.

• James Gillespie was interviewed for the ABC Rear Vision Program on hospital reform. 25 February 2009.

• Michael Duffy, a journalist with the Sydney Morning Herald and the ABC, has interviewed Milton Lewis about the history of palliative care for an article or articles about death and dying in Australia. Milton is only one of a number of people that Michael is interviewing. 18 February 2009.

• The Second Report of the Menzies Centre for Health Policy Nous Group Survey of Attitudes to the Australian Health System ‘Financial Stress and Health Care’ was released and widely reported in the media in February 2009.

• Robert Wells has given several ‘live’ interviews on ABC national and local radio and WIN TV News on various aspects of health policy.
Presentations

- Stephen Leeder presented, via a pre-recorded DVD, at the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association Annual General Meeting, October 2008.

- Stephen Leeder chaired a session at the Informa Chronic Disease Management Summit, December 2008.

- Stephen Leeder chaired the Community Engagement and Outreach session at the University of Sydney Sustainability and Health Consultation Forum, December 2008.

- Stephen Leeder made a short presentation at the University of Sydney Academic Board Forum on ‘What constitutes research in health policy?’ December 2008.

- Anne Marie Thow was a key organizer of the ‘Adding Value to Pacific Island Foods Conference’. Stephen Leeder also addressed this conference. December 2008.

- Stephen Leeder spoke at the Blue Mountains Division of General Practice Chronic Disease Management Workshop on the work of SCIPPS, December 2008.


- Stephen Leeder participated in the International Advisory Panel convened by Jeffrey D. Sachs in New Delhi to advise the Indian Minister of Health and Family Welfare on India’s National Rural Health Mission, February 2009.

- Stephen Leeder chaired the Microeconomic Impact of Cardiovascular Diseases Conference hosted by the Centre for Chronic Disease Control (CCDC) in New Delhi, February 2009.

- Stephen Leeder moderated two panels at the Healthcare World Australia 2009 Conference. The first panel was on policy and reform implications on future sustainability, and the second was titled “Getting the federal-state mix right.” February 2009.

- Robert Wells chaired a national stakeholders’ meeting on gene patenting on 12 February 2009.

Events

In 2009 the Menzies Centre for Health Policy will deliver regular seminars that address contemporary health policy issues. The Menzies Centre will partner with Minter Ellison to continue the Health Conundrums series and host the inaugural S.T. Lee Lecture. The Menzies Oration and Emerging Health Policy Researchers Conference are regular features of the events program and attract widespread interest. Recent events include:

- **9 December: Self care symposium**
  
  The second invitation-only symposium on self care was held in 9 December. The event was well attended and generated some interesting discussion. The question, 'What is self care and the role of personal responsibility? Was addressed from consumer, political and primary care perspectives.

- **17 February: Health Literacy: Just what the doctor ordered?**
  
  Dr Jim Gillespie, Deputy Director, Menzies Centre for Health Policy, presented the findings on health literacy from a recent survey of 1200 Australians. The Menzies Centre for Health Policy and The Nous Group surveyed Australians to understand their attitudes towards the health system. Respondents were asked to answer questions regarding expectations, confidence and satisfaction with the system, along with questions on health literacy, private health, privacy and Commonwealth-State relations. Dr Clive Aspin, SCIPPS Research Director, complemented Dr Gillespie’s research with health literacy research findings from the SCIPPS qualitative study. Professor Don Nutbeam provided concluding commentary on the urgent need for action on poor health literacy levels in Australia.
Appendix 1 – List of Menzies Centre for Health Policy Staff

Directors

Professor Stephen Leeder, The University of Sydney
Mr Robert Wells, The Australian National University

Menzies Foundation Fellow: Dr Lesley Russell

University of Sydney

- Deputy Director: Dr Jim Gillespie
- Manager: Amanda Dominello
- Administrative and Research Officer: Yvonne Inall
- Events and Communication Officer: Diana Freeman
- Project Officer: Annika Rosenblatt
- Research Fellow: Mr Joel Negin

Research Students:

- PhD Student: Anne Marie Thow
- PhD Student: Abdolvahab Baghbanian
- PhD Student: Surianti Sukeri

Visitors:

- WHO Fellowship: Xie Dongfang

The Diabetes Unit:

- Director: Associate Professor Ruth Colagiuri
- Executive Assistant: Jenny Tapp
- Research and Project Officer: Maria Gomez
- Senior Research Officer: Dr Seham Girgis
- Project and Research Officer: Renee Slade

Serious and Continuing Illness Policy and Practice Study:

- Research Director, SCIPPS: Dr Clive Aspin
- Research Fellow, SCIPPS: Dr Masoud Mirzaei
- Research Officer, SCIPPS: Beverley Essue
- Program Support Officer, SCIPPS: Kate Corcoran

Blue Mountains Eye and Hearing Study:

- Postdoctoral Researcher: Julie Schneider

Australian National University

- Deputy Director: Professor Judith Whitworth
- Business Manager: Laura Vitler
- Research Assistant: Sylvana Anthony

Serious and Continuing Illness Policy and Practice Study

- Dr Yun-Hee Jeon, Senior Research Fellow
- Ms Tanisha Jowsey, Research Officer
- Ms Laurann Yen, Visiting Fellow