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Introduction

The Menzies Centre for Health Policy (MCHP) is an academic research centre conducting health policy research, analysis, advice and education. It was established in 2006 by a grant from the Menzies Foundation. The MCHP is uniquely placed as it operates from two of Australia’s premier universities: The Menzies Centre (Sydney) is part of the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney and the Menzies Centre (ANU) is part of the Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University. The two Centres work collaboratively on shared research grants and operate under a common Board of Directors.

The work of the MCHP focuses on improving public health outcomes through policy innovation and practical implementation. With a program of community engagement, MCHP encourages informed debate about how Australians can influence health policy to ensure that it is consistent with their values and priorities; policies that are able to deliver safe, high quality health care that is sustainable in the long term. The MCHP has a particular interest in the policy conundrums posed by the growing challenge of chronic illness. Its research has demonstrated a strong commitment to patient-centred outcomes.

This report covers the period 1 December 2012 – 28 February 2013.

New Director

Professor Andrew Wilson is Director of the Menzies Centre for Health Policy at the University of Sydney. He has specialist professional qualifications in clinical medicine and public health, and a PhD in epidemiology. His research interests concern the application of epidemiology to informing decision making in clinical medicine, public health, and health system policy and planning. He is an author on over 100 papers and reports. These include aspects of prevention and management of chronic disease, evaluation of the effectiveness and responsiveness of health care and the impact of social and physical environment on health.

He is currently a co-investigator on research funded by the ARC (Engaging the public in healthcare decision making – Quantifying preferences for health care through citizen juries) and the NHMRC (CRE in control of health care acquired infections). Since 2002 he has been a chief investigator on projects funded by the NHMRC, the Cancer Council Queensland, the Canadian Health Research Institute, Queensland Health, Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defence.

As Chief Health Officer and Deputy Director General Public Health, NSW Health (1997-2001), his responsibilities included policy development and service planning and coordination in AIDS and infectious diseases, health surveillance, drug dependency treatment and prevention programs, environmental health and food safety, pharmaceutical and private healthcare facility regulation, and health promotion. He directed and managed national health priorities responses, managed and coordinated responses to issues such as cryptosporidium in the Sydney water supply, adverse coronial inquires into deaths associated with health care facilities, and disaster preparedness and response. As Deputy Director General Policy, Strategy and Resourcing, Queensland Health (2006-2010), his responsibilities included overall policy coordination, health service and clinical workforce planning and inter and intra government relations. Specific areas of responsibility included maternal and child health, indigenous health, cancer services, oral health, women’s health, older persons health and residential age care, community health services, rehabilitation and sub-acute care, palliative care, rural and remote health and clinical training and education.
His past academic appointments include Executive Dean, Faculty of Health, Queensland University of Technology; Professor of Public Health, and Deputy Head of the School of Population Health, acting Director of the Centre for Military and Veterans Health and Deputy Dean and Director of Research, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Queensland.

He is a member of the Repatriation Medical Authority and the Board of the Metro South Health and Hospital District. He chairs the Protocol Advisory Sub-Committee of the Medical Services Advisory Committee, and is a member of the Specialist Medical Education Accreditation Committee of the Australian Medical Council. He has previously been a Board member of Health Workforce Australia and of the Greater Brisbane South Medicare Local. He served on the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, the Medical Board of NSW, the NHMRC, and the Board of the Garvin Institute for Medical Research.

Other Staffing Matters

- Dr Carmen Huckel-Schneider has commenced as a part time lecturer (0.4 FTE) for the Master of Health Policy.
- Kylie Ann Mallitt has returned to the NHRMC Care Navigation project after a period of leave.
- Dr Si Win Tin will be spending two days per week at the Menzies Centre. Si works with Associate Professor Ruth Colagiuri in Health and Sustainability as a Research Fellow managing a project in the Solomon Islands. He recently started a PhD on the quality and sustainability of diabetes care in Pacific Island countries.

New Research Students

Two PhD students have commenced at MCHP, ANU in 2013. The first, Ms Laurann Yen, a PhD scholar working on an ARC Discovery project: The making and unmaking of Australian public policy: using Historical Institutionalism theory to understand the path from Medibank to Medicare. Laurann was previously the deputy director of MCHP (ANU). The second, Ms Belinda Lawton a PhD scholar working on health service provision in developing countries.

Visitors to MCHP

- Oliver Herbert is a long term research affiliate of the MCHP and is in Sydney for a three month visit (Jan – April) working with Stephen Leeder. He is studying the effects of the Melanesian tradition and Western modernity on public health in the Madang Province (Karkar Island), Papua New Guinea. He is combining a quantitative epidemiological approach with a qualitative anthropological approach. Oliver holds a PhD in Medicine from the Technical University Munich (environmental allergology) and a PhD in anthropology from the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich (explanatory models of illness). His continued interest in health policy in Papua New Guinea led to his current fieldwork based research (a cooperation between the Menzies Centre for Health Policy, University of Sydney and the University of Bremen, Germany).
New Grants

- A cross institutional ARC Discovery grant (2013-2015) has been awarded involving two MCHP staff members. The topic is Trade policy: maximising benefits for nutrition, food security, human health, and the economy. ANU is the administering institution for the grant.

  Investigators are: Professor Sharon Friel (ANU); Dr Adrian Kay (MCHP - ANU), Dr Deborah H Gleeson (La Trobe); Professor Gabriele Bammer (ANU); Dr Anne Marie T Thow (MCHP – Sydney); Professor Ronald Labonte (Ottawa); Dr Wendy Snowdon (Deakin); Dr David Stuckler (Cambridge).

  Project Summary: Depending on how it is done, trade can be good or bad for peoples’ health and social well-being. This study will provide evidence to support the development of trade policy which combines economic as well as social and health goals. This will help improve global food security and human health, reduce poverty and support good international relations.

- MCHP ANU was successful in gaining seed funding from the Research School of Asia Pacific, ANU for a research project titled Diagnosing health governance capacity in the Asia-Pacific region: infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases & development assistance for health. This project will develop a proposal to investigate theoretically and assess empirically health governance capacity across and beyond individual states in the Asia and the Pacific region. This will be done by designing a comparative case study of development assistance for health (DAH) programmes in Region in terms of meeting the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Staff Travel

- Jan 14 – 15: Anne Marie Thow was a keynote speaker at the Thai Ministry of Health (International Health Promotion Programme) conference on trade and healthy diets, Jan 15. Her two presentations focused on the implications of free trade agreements for food and nutrition in low and middle income countries, as well as their possible effect in limiting policy space for prevention interventions. She also gave a seminar at Mahidol University on food taxation on Jan 14.

- Jan 31 – 1 Feb: Stephen Leeder was a member of the International Advisory Panel to the Ministry of Health, India, regarding the National Rural Health Mission (NRJM) of India. The panel met with the Model Districts Project team from the Columbia Global Center. While he was in India he met with co-authors Drs Prabhakaran and Harikrishnan for the next edition of A Race Against Time.

- Feb 11-14 Anne Marie Thow attended a subregional workshop on trade and NCDs for Pacific Island countries held in Nadi, Fiji,. The workshop was a collaboration between the Centre for Preventing Obesity and NCDs (CPOND) at the Fiji National University, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the WHO and the UNDP. Anne Marie presented on: trade, agriculture and NCDs; developing trade-compliant health promotion strategies; and on the fatty meat bans implemented in Fiji and Samoa (in collaboration with representatives from countries).

- Feb 27 - Anne Marie Thow participated in an expert panel on food taxation, which comprises part of a Griffith University research project on food taxation in Australia. The project is funded by the Australian National Preventive Health Agency.

Events

- MCHP (ANU) will co-host a roundtable with Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI) in National Reconciliation week, May 2013 to develop an Indigenous research agenda.
**Publications**

**Journals**


**Media & Industry**


- Corderoy A. Trading health for even fatter profits, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 February 2013. Dr Anne Marie Thow is quoted.

- Banned meat slips in Fiji, *Fiji Times*, 13 February 2013. A study by Dr Anne Marie Thow of the Menzies Centre for Health Policy at the University of Sydney is mentioned.

- **Smith-Merry, J**, **Leeder S**. Right connections, *MJA Insight*, 11 February 2013.

- **Leeder S**. Taking heart from Indian progress, *Australian Medicine Online*, 11 February 2013.

- **Leeder S**. Was saying sorry enough?, *Australian Doctor*, 6 February 2013.

- Moran T. New President’s ‘view from the outside’, *PSNews*, January 2013. Recent research from the Menzies Centre for Health Policy and the Nous Group is mentioned.

- AEC launch risks poor diets as junk food grows cheaper, *Bangkok Post*, 16 January 2013. Dr Anne Marie Thow is quoted.

- **Leeder S**. Prepare to stand by – but then what?, *Australian Medicine Online*, 14 January 2013.

• Leeder S. 2013: the year for politicians to start listening, *Australian Medicine Online*, 17 December 2012.


• Colagiuri R, Morrice E. Coal industry thriving, but at what social and health cost?, *The Conversation*, 2 November 2012.

Reports

• The Health of Senior Australians and the Out-of-Pocket Healthcare Costs They Face, *National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre (NSPAC)*, November 2012. The authors of this report are Ian McRae from the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute at the ANU, Laurann Yen from the Menzies Centre for Health Policy at the ANU, Yun-Hee Jeon from the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of Sydney, Menaka Herath from the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute and Beverley Essue from the George Institute for Global Health and Menzies Centre for Health Policy. The survey was funded through an NHMRC program grant to the Menzies Centre for Health Policy as part of the Serious and Continuing Illness Policy and Practice Study, and was managed by staff at the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute.


Conference Presentations


• Siabani S, Leeder S, Davidson PM. Comorbidity burden and sociodemographic characteristics of patients with chronic heart failure in Kermanshah, [poster presentation] Iran. 9th Women’s Health International Congress on Women’s Health 2012: Partnering for a Brighter Future, Bangkok, Thailand, Nov 14-16, 2012.


• McNab J, Gillespie J. ‘From local innovation in chronic illness management to universal access: system dynamic approaches to policy learning’, Second Global Symposium on Health Systems Research, Beijing 31 Oct-3 Nov 2012.

• Essue B, Jan S. Is universal social health insurance the panacea for economic hardship associated with illness? Lessons from Australia. Second Global Symposium on Health Systems Research; Beijing, China. 31 October – 3 November 2012.
Report to the Menzies Foundation

The Menzies Centre for Health Policy is a collaborative Centre between The Australian National University and the University of Sydney. It aims to provide the Australian people with a better understanding of their health system and what it provides for them. The Centre encourages informed debate about how Australians can influence health policy to ensure that it is consistent with their values and priorities and is able to deliver safe, high quality health care that is sustainable in the long term.

The Menzies Centre:

• produces and publishes high-quality analyses of current health policy issues;
• delivers public seminars and education programs on a wide variety of health policy topics;
• undertakes comprehensive research projects on health policy issues.

For more information

Menzies Centre for Health Policy
D02 Victor Coppleson Building
University of Sydney
Phone: +61 2 9036 5412
Fax:+61 2 9351 5204
Email: mchp@sydney.edu.au
Website: http://www.menzieshealthpolicy.edu.au/