A large body of work has been conducted around workplace health promotion (WHP) within the PRC and PANORG in recent years, and builds on PRC previously funded research in this area.

Two resources – the step-by-step guide Healthy Workplace Guide: Ten Steps to Implementing a Workplace Health Program and a 4-page brochure Healthy Workplace Activities at a Glance – were co-developed with the NSW Heart Foundation and Cancer Council NSW, to provide guidance and practical suggestions for workplaces to promote and support a healthy lifestyle for employees. The reach, acceptability and impact of these resources were evaluated in Lithgow and Parramatta in a collaborative study with local health districts.

Work was also conducted to support the development of the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative in response to the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health. This included the development of an overarching evaluation framework for the Initiative. Additionally, a Workplace Health Promotion survey – piloted in Lithgow and Parramatta – was designed to collect information on WHP at the organisational level, specifically to characterise the workplace, to inform planning of workplace interventions, and to evaluate the impact of WHP initiatives. A qualitative study of twenty-five employers in NSW identified views placed on the value of employee health by employers, who should be responsible, key barriers and facilitators to WHP, and an understanding of how WHP is currently being approached by businesses in NSW. Overall this study provided preliminary insight into the key issues to be addressed when implementing WHP programs.

Most recently, an evidence review, commissioned by the NSW Office of Preventive Health, was conducted to inform the development of a support and facilitation service for WHP - which is a primary component of the NSW Healthy Workers Initiative.

Collectively this research substantially informs the types and ways in which government can support workplaces in NSW to become healthier environments (both culturally and physically), in which to work, thereby supporting employee healthy behaviours.
I am pleased to be the editor of this edition of the PRC newsletter. In recent times (as is the life of many researchers and academic) a considerable amount of effort has gone into grant applications and into scientific reports.

This newsletter provides some reflections on recent achievements, including work in translational public health research, investigation of food marketing, and our recent success at being named a WHO Collaborating Centre. At the recent National Preventive Awards, the Good for Kids Program was the winner of the Preventive Health Translational Research Award category. More detail on this is provided on page 7, and you will find an overview of recent conference presentations and attendance on page 6.

The Newsletters also highlights some specific examples of PRC’s applied research focus including Workplace Health Promotion, Sitting and Health and Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (SPANS).

I would also like to take this opportunity as Director of the Prevention Research Collaboration to extend my heartfelt thanks to the PRC staff (both past and present) and PRC Co-Directors. I have been fortunate to work with such talented and committed colleagues. I look forward to what the continued role of PRC will bring with renewed funding from NSW Ministry of Health under the research program for Physical Activity, Nutrition and Obesity Prevention, and under the Public Health and Health Service Research Scheme.

Adrian Bauman
Director of PRC

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### RECENT PRC PUBLICATIONS


- **Zander A, Passmore E, Mason C and Rissel C**. Joy; Exercise, Enjoyment, Getting out: A Qualitative Study of Older People’s Experience of Cycling in Sydney, Australia. *Journal of Environmental and Public Health* Volume 2013, Article ID 547453
One of the newer, innovative areas of research that the Prevention Research Collaboration is proud to be more involved in is the area of translational or applied research. Translational research is a deliberative focus of “translating” research discoveries that are found to work well in tightly controlled conditions to being replicated in different settings, populations or on a larger scale. PRC researchers have been involved in exploring the process of translation and the types of research and steps needed in order to progress from describing a population health problem to implementing a population-wide program designed to address the problem. There are many examples of programs of this work as demonstrated below.

The reason this work is so important is that it constitutes ‘applied research’ which is particularly concerned with seeking information about practical problems. In the case of population health research, applied research is interested in "applying" pragmatic research and evaluation strategies to answer policy relevant and program development questions. Translational research looks at how to address a problem rather than only describing the issue and its effects.

Useful Definitions

**Efficacy research:** the extent to which the intended intervention effect or benefit is achieved under optimal, tightly controlled conditions.

**Effectiveness research:** the extent to which the intended effect or benefit achieved under optimal conditions is also achieved in real world settings.

**Replication:** the duplication of subsequent studies in which efficacious programs are adapted for other settings or other targets.

**Scaling-Up:** taking an intervention from a local or small scale to a large population wide program.

**Dissemination:** proactive and planned implementation and spreading of evidence-based interventions to the target audience across populations.

**Translational research:** discoveries through clinical and controlled research designed to develop and test approaches, and the subsequent replication and dissemination of approaches that have been shown to be effective.

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In recent years, the PRC has been leading the way in monitoring the extent of children’s exposure to advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages and in researching options for regulation around this issue in Australia and the wider Asia-Pacific region. Why regulate? Because self-regulatory, voluntary initiatives from the food and advertising industries don’t work. Through this collaborative research with Cancer Council NSW we have shown that such initiatives do not result in less unhealthy food and beverage advertising at times when the highest numbers of children watch commercial TV. Ongoing monitoring is important to generate high quality evidence to advocate for an effective regulatory arrangement that protects children from this harmful form advertising.

PRC research has also revealed that three-quarters of food and beverage products in our major supermarket chains that display promotional characters on the packaging are unhealthy (i.e. high in salt, fat and/or sugar). Similarly, we have demonstrated that most food companies sponsoring children’s sporting activities sell unhealthy products; and that children exposed to such promotions are highly aware of and report liking these companies. These findings demonstrate the need for broader industry-wide standards and regulations to limit children’s exposure to these other forms of promotions.

Secondary analyses of data from the NSW Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (SPANS) have shown that the availability of sugar-sweetened soft drinks in the school and home environments may increase the likelihood of children’s consumption. Through research conducted with the Healthy Kids Association, we found food and drink products registered under the Healthy Kids Nutrient Criteria frequently fell just above or below nutrient limits specified, suggesting subsequent positive reformulation by manufacturers. PRC researchers have also defined and tested methods for mapping the availability of food retail and food service outlets, notably in regional and rural areas, observing the ready availability of unhealthy products and the low availability of fresh produce in these areas.

Consumer nutrition literacy has been another active area of PRC research. We’ve shown that Australian consumers have a poor understanding of terms such as ‘energy’ and ‘kilojoules’ and a tendency to perceive higher energy products as healthier. Congruently, the PRC has had representation on the Fast Choices Labelling Reference Group, providing expert advice on the kilojoule labelling scheme which has been implemented in quick service restaurants across NSW. In addition, quantitative research and an evidence review of interpretive front-of-pack labelling schemes has contributed to advocacy work and the development of the currently proposed star-rating scheme in Australia.

The PRC has also been active in advocating for the increased availability and access to healthier foods through stakeholder input to the National Food Plan and the Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney, and submissions in response to public consultations on nutrition labelling and the recently revised national dietary guidelines for Australians.

A full list of PRC publications related to this article is available at: http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/public-health/panorg/research-practice/
Population health monitoring surveys form one component in the public health research cycle, providing a key source of information about the prevalence and patterns of public health problems. Interestingly, NSW is the only Australian state to have an established systematic health monitoring survey of a representative sample of children. The NSW Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (SPANS), monitors weight and weight-related behaviours of children aged 5-16 years. Critical to SPANS is the dissemination of the findings to raise awareness and inform NSW policy makers, stakeholders, and the community, of the weight and weight-related behaviour of children.

Undertaking SPANS is one of PANORG’s major achievements with the primary purpose to provide information to:

- Monitor weight & weight-related behaviour of school-aged children in NSW
- Monitor progress towards State Plan & State Health Plan targets
- Inform health promotion policy & program development
- Inform PDHPE & student welfare policy development

The translation of the SPANS findings to guide policy and practice has demonstrated a model for collaboration between researchers and policy makers. Government decisions need to be driven by evidence. To date, SPANS findings have informed a variety of policy and practice changes in schools.

**Policy impacts** Each survey has had specific policy impacts. For example, 1997 findings informed the development of a policy to focus on fundamental movement skills (FMS) in schools; 2004 findings underpinned the ban of soft drink sales in schools and; 2010 findings led to the NSW Auditor-General’s Report on Physical Activity in government primary schools.

**Practice impacts** The impact on practices across sectors flow from policy impacts. For example, the policy focus on FMS in schools led to the development of new curriculum materials, resources and professional development for teachers which have led to a standardized approach to teaching FMS in schools and; the low prevalence of children meeting the daily recommendation for fruit and vegetable underpinned the Crunch and Sip program.

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**GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF SITTING AND HEALTH**

The PRC sitting and health research program is funded by an NHMRC Program Grant and has been underway since 2009. This research program covers a range of issues about prolonged sitting and other sedentary behaviour in adults including:

- What are the prevalence and correlates of sedentary behaviour?
- What are the associations between sedentary behaviour and health outcomes?
- How do we measure sedentary behaviour reliably and accurately?
- What are effective and feasible strategies for reducing sitting time?
CONFERENCE UPDATES

AUSTRALIAN HEALTH PROMOTION ASSOCIATION 21ST NATIONAL CONFERENCE
Sydney, 17-19 June 2013

A large contingent of PRC staff attended the 21st AHPA Conference at Sydney’s Darling Harbour with many showcasing recent PRC research through presentations and posters. The conference keynotes were broad in focus and all of a high quality. Specific to physical activity and nutrition was Dr Louise Hardy’s presentation, How does children’s weight stack up when the odds are stacked against them? Today’s Children in a Brave New World which included both new data and trends over time from the NSW Schools and Physical Activity Survey (SPANS). PRC colleagues also presented on the Go4Fun Evaluation, workplace physical activity and nutrition challenges and preventing chronic disease in older adults.

Congratulations to PRC Co-Director Professor Chris Rissel who was honoured with Lifetime Membership of the Australian Health Promotion Association, a testament to his many years of commitment to the society and his strong leadership in health promotion.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF BEHAVIOURAL NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (ISBNPA) ANNUAL MEETING
Ghent, Belgium, 22-25 May 2013

Several PRC staff travelled to Ghent, Belgium to attend this year’s ISBNPA annual meeting. All attending staff were involved in delivering oral or poster presentations across a range of areas including sedentary behaviour, physical activity, epidemiology, environments and physical activity, fundamental movement skills, dietary behaviour, social media interventions, and the Get Healthy service.

The 2013 ISBNPA meeting was a huge success and delegates enjoyed inspiring presentations and conversations in a beautiful European city. Keynote speeches featured international experts in food policy (Tim Lang), obesity (John Reilly), genetics of physical activity (Ruth Loos), and wireless technology (Simon Marshall).

8TH GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON HEALTH PROMOTION
Helsinki, Finland, 10-14 June 2013

PRC Director Professor Adrian Bauman was invited to attend this prestigious World Health Organization (WHO) event where 900 delegates from all over the world discussed how political decisions on health are implemented into practical actions. Professor Bauman described in his presentations how physical activity, through its relevance across broad policy areas such as urban planning and transport, has unique importance within the concept of Health in All Policies. The conference culminated in a commitment to the Helsinki Statement on Health in All Policies. On Adrian’s return, colleagues from the PRC and broader networks were treated to his presentation as part of the regular PRC Lunchtime Seminar series.

For further details about the conference, the Helsinki Statement and Health in All Policies, visit http://www.healthpromotion2013.org/media-healthpromotion2013/news/67-finland-leads-the-way-in-taking-health-into-all-policies

NATIONAL HEART FOUNDATION MORRIS ORATION 26TH JULY 2013

On the 26th July 2013 Professor Adrian Bauman gave the inaugural Jerry Morris Oration at Parliament House in Canberra.

British scientist Jerry Morris did a study 60 years ago that determined that bus drivers on London’s double-decker buses had nearly twice the rate of heart disease as the conductors did. The conclusion that climbing stairs of the bus had positive health effects for the conductors was considered to be completely “revolutionary”.

In giving the inaugural Jerry Morris Oration, Professor Bauman called for a unified approach to combating the growing problem of inactivity, detailing that “physical inactivity causes as many deaths as does smoking, globally it causes 50% more deaths than obesity, yet we don’t fund physical inactivity strategies as much as we fund obesity prevention and tobacco prevention”. Professor Bauman also outlined that tackling the problem was more than just a health strategy, it has to involve working with transport, urban planning, with schools and with education. “We have to make everyday physical activity normal to get the next generation off the couch and doing things differently.”

Photo courtesy of The Canberra Times
NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH AWARDS

In 2005 Australia’s largest child obesity prevention trial commenced in the Hunter New England Area Health Service (AHS), Good for Kids Good for Life. The program development and evaluation comprised a tripartite partnership between the Hunter New England AHS, and the NSW Ministry of Health and the former PANORG, NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity.

Good for Kids was one of the first Australian examples of translational research and up-scaling a program across a large population. One of PANORG’s key roles in the Good for Kids program was to lead the field evaluation which involved baseline data collection in 2006 and follow-up in 2010. Good for Kids contributed to the leadership and capacity building of various sectors involved in children’s health. The extraordinary work of all involved in Good for Kids over many years was recently recognised at the National Preventive Health Symposium at Parliament House in Canberra on Friday 26 July 2013 at the inaugural National Preventive Health Awards.

These awards are to encourage leadership in the area of preventive health, and recognise sectors of the Australian community that work to promote health and well-being. The Awards covered four key areas: local communities through Medicare Locals, translational research, journalism; and workplace through health and well-being programs; and Good for Kids was the winner of the Preventive Health Translational Research Award category.

Good for Kids was selected as one of the 22 finalists from more than 80 nominations from around Australia for the inaugural National Preventive Health Awards. It is wonderful that the work of PANORG has been included in the recognition of this prestige’s national award.

PRC FUNDING SUCCESS

The Prevention Research Collaboration has recently been successful in a number of important competitive grant applications, including:

Population Health and Health Services Research Support Program (round four) from the NSW Ministry of Health (2013-2017), formerly known as Capacity Building Infrastructure Grant, will provide PRC with infrastructure funding to undertake population health and health services research, which will allow the augmentation of existing research and the creation of new projects under the translational research banner.

Research Program for Physical Activity, Nutrition and Obesity Prevention from the NSW Ministry of Health (2013-2018). This funding is the next iteration of the Physical Activity, Nutrition and Obesity Research Group (PANORG) and will provide PRC with funding to continue to undertake applied and policy relevant research in the area of physical activity, nutrition and obesity prevention.

Sydney Research Networks Scheme (SyReNS) 2013-2015. PRC has been awarded funding under this scheme to support major cross-faculty, multi-disciplinary, collaborative initiatives in research and research training in the area of physical activity across the Sydney University. Our network is called the PLANET (Physical Activity NETwork) and presently has 29 members from eight of the university’s faculties.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION COLLABORATING CENTRE

A group of Sydney University Researchers lead by Professor Adrian Bauman and Professor Stephen Collaguiri recently became a World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre in Physical Activity, Nutrition and Obesity. A WHO collaborating centre is defined as “an institution designated by the Director-General to form part of an international collaborative network carrying out activities in support of the Organisation’s program at all level”.
MEET AND GREET

KRIS ROGERS

Kris joined the PRC as Senior Statistician in October last year. He was previously at The Sax institute where he was the biostatistician with The 45 and Up study, and had previously been with the PRC in 2007 as a trainee biostatistician.

His work at the PRC is varied; encompassing work with Get Healthy and a range of projects with 45 and Up. It’s difficult to define a set of keywords that cover his interests, but ‘linked data’, ‘propensity score’, and ‘strange regression models’ (ask him about Tobit regression) will do.

For leisure, Kris recommends motorbikes, brewing beer, cooking, and caring for wildlife.

LINA ENGELEN

Lina joined the PRC as a research fellow in March 2013. She is a Swedish "vagabond" who has now settled in Sydney. She received her MSc in biology and physiology in Lund, Sweden; and continued on to do her PhD in Utrecht, the Netherlands on the relationship between oral physiology and texture perception. The next stop was a 2-year post-doc in Lausanne, Switzerland, where she managed a project on the various aspects of fat perception. In 2006 she arrived in Sydney with her husband and tiny firstborn. Lina’s time in Australia has therefore been child-themed; and after another baby, and she joined Health Sciences at Sydney Uni, where she studied children’s physical activity, after-school pursuits and social skills.

Now, Lina is very enthusiastic about being at PRC, working on various projects related to the Charles Perkins Centre and the PLANET network, among other interesting things. She loves the great outdoors, travelling, food and spending time with her friends and lively family.

MELANIE CRANE

Mel started a PhD this year with Chris Rissel measuring the public health and quality of life impact of cycling infrastructure on communities. She is enjoying the fact that riding a bike around town is an essential part of her PhD; and is looking forward to more bike paths being available around Sydney.

Mel has previously worked in cancer prevention research & evaluation at the Cancer Institute and in respiratory research at the Woolcock Institute. She has also worked as a nutritionist and community development worker in Kyrgyzstan and an outdoor educator, among other things.

Since coming to the PRC Mel has enjoyed feeling a bit normal and not being regarded as the “weird health freak”. On the weekend she would happily be running, MTB riding, rock climbing or surfing and teaching others. She also enjoys reading the newspaper (the paper version) and church.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

T +61 2 9036 3271


E prc.admin@sydney.edu.au

PANORG is funded by the NSW Ministry of Health.

Prevention Research Collaboration