Victorian Medical Women's Society

Celebrating our history, advancing our future

Founded 1896

June 2015 afmw.org.au/vic

Volume 13 Issue 3



President's Report
A/Professor Deb Colville

Dear Members

I welcome you to our exciting June 2015 newsletter.

I commend to you in this month's newsletter a wonderful story from graduate student Cara Beck about mentoring as a friendship, and her second story about the women-only (with EEO approval) CV writing event report. I also liked Deakin student Annie Rose's report on our successful VMWS 'Connect over Coffee' event held in Geelong.

This month we have again been active. We have submitted a VMWS report to the Royal Commission on Family Violence, met with a representative of the Department of Health, and written to the AMA and parliamentarians. We have contributed to the debate via an article by the Age Health journalist Julie Medew, prompted by reports of the higher attrition rates of female surgical trainees compared to men in surgical training. Three VMWS members, including myself, attended The Western Pacific Regional MWIA conference in Taiwan.

Last month I summarised my own 'take' on current media stories about the problems of bullying and harassment in medical training and work. I categorise these issues under the headings of sexism, bullying, harassment, and victimisation. This month, I write briefly about possible solutions, concentrating on what ought to be the medical profession's 'institutional response'.

I choose this month's concept to be 'feminism', defined as follows. "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression. This does not imply that men are the enemy. All sexist thinking and action is the problem, whether those who perpetuate it are female or male, child or adult. This definition is also broad enough to include an understanding of systemic institutionalised sexism. To understand feminism ... implies one has to necessarily understand sexism" (hooks, bell 2000:1)

I argue here that feminism, and thus sexism, are neglected in organised medicine, and that the above topics cannot be addressed without addressing sexism. I would argue that addressing sexism is the key to current solutions. This might seem obvious to some but the current debate is so often silent on this pervasive problem in our professional lives. Any solution would like this: women's life courses, styles of learning and styles of working would fit seamlessly with health care work. Women would not have to be forced to fit their lives into an ill-fitting traditionally male model for professional training and practice. We as women doctors expect to be both 'high performing' professionals and at the same time to be 'high performing' family members. What are we to do when these two are placed in conflict by old-fashioned professional attitudes and structures? The answer requires considerable imagination.

Those who say that this problem is simply as commonly widespread across our medical professional behaviours as it is in the community risk drawing the easy implication that there are simply no solutions. Surely not. I would say that no, there are solutions to both. There are solutions not only across society to the wider problems caused by sexism, (such as family violence and the gender pay gap) but also across the medical profession, including surgery. The solution therefore is to engage in questioning the sexist values underpinning current structures and norms, and if they are found wanting, to fix these structures and change the norms. Patriarchal values construct women as less than fully human, and society's norms and institutional structure flow from that premise. This means for instance that it wouldn't matter if women trainees

leave surgical training because the barriers to concurrent motherhood and current surgical rosters are experienced as prohibitive. Rather than change the professions values, those who hold to patriarchal values dictate not that discrimination ought to be fixed, but that if discrimination lowers her performance she must simply leave that profession.

Once values are exposed, clarified, and questioned by those inside and outside the profession, an active campaign that results in senior women EVERYWHERE in health care decision making can result. This will provide the dividend that follows when multitudes of women contribute to committee work, and mentoring of younger men and women by both sexes occurs by both senior men and many senior women. Cultural change results. Mentoring increases success in grant applications. Such programs as 'She for He' programs, Athena awards, and anonymity in grant and publication decisions are also institutional solutions. These solutions involve extra resourcing. The argument that women don't have 'special needs' they have 'fewer resources'. (Quadrio 2001:201) is compelling. The convincing argument that the 'pipeline effect' (Sinclair 1998:18) doesn't work is also embedded in the medical literature (Sewell 2002). Sewell notes that by current trends, it will be several hundred years before equality in senior roles is achieved in medicine.

Well. Back to this month. I look forward to seeing you at our forthcoming events, including Connect over Coffee on June 13th, and our Lyceum lunch on July 15th.

Warm Regards

Deb Colville

June 2015

References: hooks, bell (no capitals) (2000) Sewell, Jill (2002) Sinclair, Amanda (1998) Quadrio, Carolyn (2001)

VMWS Committee 2015

A/Professor Deborah Colville

Dr Rosalie Cooper **Dr Marissa Daniels Position Vacant**

Dr Kate Duncan

Dr Skye Siskos

Dr Sarah Lonie

Dr Zoe Dorevitch

Dr Francesca Bridge

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Dr Desiree Yap

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Ms Ashleigh Clark

Ms Emma Kelso

Ms Jade Tregoweth

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Student Representative - Monash

Student Representative - Monash

Student Representative - Notre Dame

Student Representative - Notre Dame

Student Representative - Deakin

Student Representative - Melbourne

Student Representative - Melbourne

Student Representative - Melbourne Student Representative - Melbourne

Student Representative - Melbourne

Student Representative - Melbourne

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Events Calendar 2015

Lyceum Lunch

"Resourcefulness in the Face of Sexual Harassment in the Training Workplace"

Special Guest Speaker
Dr Caroline Tan
Neurosurgeon

Wednesday 15th July
Lyceum Club
12:15 arrival for 12:30pm
start

Connect Over Coffee
Saturday 13th June at
10am
Baretto Espresso Bar
University of Melbourne

September Event
To Be Confirmed

VMWS AGM
Saturday 7th November
Venue TBC

AFMW AGMSaturday 21st November
Sydney

Committee Meetings
Monday 3rd August
Monday 5th October
Monday 7th December



www.racgp.org.au



Mentoring Medical Women

By Ms Cara Beck VMWS Student representative University of Melbourne

When I asked Dr Rosalind Terry about mentors she has had in the past, she had to think about it for a moment, as she had never had a formal mentor before. This is not surprising given the rise of formal mentor programs is quite recent. When I asked Dr Terry to think broadly about someone who had guided her and given her advice on her career, she identified quite a few people in her past who have acted as mentors. Whether we recognise it or not we have all had these people. Rosalind recounted a lovely story about the head of pathology at Passavent Memorial Hospital the teaching hospital of Northwestern University in Chicago who took Rosalind on as a microbiologist in 1963 after a recommendation from her supervisor in Australia. She turned out to be an extremely supportive mentor for Rosalind and her career plans, encouraging and helping her to try to get into medical school in the US, but unfortunately visa requirements stopped this from happening at the time. Some years later when Rosalind was graduating as a doctor back in Australia, this same mentor got on a boat from the US to Sydney and then flew to Melbourne just so she could tell Rosalind in person how proud she was! Imagine if we all had people in our professional lives like this!

Mentoring has been described as "a complex, intermutual process that occurs between two people of different levels of knowledge and expertise"(1). Mentoring has the potential to provide great benefits for mentees in many aspects of personal and professional development including career advancement, networking opportunities, increased job satisfaction and learning to overcome setbacks. Interestingly, women may benefit even more from having a mentor than men, with a recent study funded by the National Research Council (NRC) in the US finding that female assistant



professors without mentors had a 68% chance of receiving grant funding while those with mentors had a 93% chance of receiving grant funding (2). This difference was not seen for men.

There are also recent studies on the benefits for mentors. Of course there are the intangible benefits such as the personal satisfaction that comes from helping someone else and seeing them develop and progress in their career(3). In addition, organisational studies have shown that people with mentoring experience are more likely to be promoted and have higher salaries than those that don't (4).

As medical students and junior doctors, particularly as women, entering into the medical world can be daunting. Developing clinical reasoning skills, choosing specialties, thinking about career progression, navigating a still very male dominated culture, and working out how to combine medicine with life outside are all important issues we have to deal with. Negotiating these challenges can be made easier with a mentor who has been through this journey before us to guide and advise.

Anne Stanaway, a final year student at the University of Melbourne, sought out a mentor for these reasons and others of her own. "Throughout the medical course, I feel I haven't really had the opportunity to engage with any one member of staff by myself for long enough or in a less hectic context to ask questions about how they have navigated their way

through their careers, lives, and aspirations. I also haven't had the opportunity for any medical staff to really get to know me, especially beyond the context of a medical student. My Clinical Skills tutor from 2nd year has been awesome and is a mentor of sorts, but I usually see her in a group context and she is also my teacher, so the relationship is quite different to one I have with a mentor."

Dr Rosalind Terry and Anne began their mentoring relationship last year when the VMWS pilot mentoring program began. They have developed not only a productive and useful mentoring relationship but a wonderful friendship as well. They catch up for coffee and cake every month or two at each other's houses, cafes or the botanical gardens. They attend VMWS events together and exchange emails, postcards and phone calls "as any friends would".

Anne says "so far we're still filling in gaps in our life stories and experiences. Ros has a seemingly endless store of tales to tell from the million interesting jobs she's had over the years and wonderful people she has met. We talk a lot about our loved ones and travels - the fabric of both our lives I guess, with the medical stuff embroidered on in patches, sewn through front and back. I think talking about this gives me a sense of what Ros' values are. I don't know why this is important, perhaps it gives me something to personally relate to and to stand next to in order that I can I look into my past and future a little more clearly."



Dr Rosalind Terry

Rosalind sees the role of the mentor as being available to talk, giving gentle guidance and advice about the mentee's future plans, lifestyle issues and how to combine medicine and one's private life effectively. She feels like it is up to the mentee to ask questions and guide

the relationship to suit their requirements, and if she has something to contribute or a relevant experience to share she will. This is reflected by Anne's experience. "Ros encourages me in what I'm doing and reassures me that my approach seems sound and well balanced, which is lovely to hear as an adult and also as a bit of an anomaly as a medical student with young kids. We talk about the wonderful places Ros has worked in, some of the challenges she has faced personally and as a doctor over the vears. I learn a lot from these anecdotes. especially as I can see myself doing similar work at some point in my life."

Rosalind enjoys being a mentor so much she is involved in numerous programs. She currently mentors a master's student studying at the University of Melbourne from Papua New Guinea where Rosalind worked for many years, and a 93 year old retired radiologist through an AMA scheme, in addition to Anne through our VMWS program. Rosalind says she enjoys mentoring as she likes talking with interesting people, telling stories and sharing her experiences.

Of course mentoring relationships come in all forms and the VMWS mentor program is looking for women at all stages of their medical careers who would like to take part and benefit from a mentoring relationship. Some may remain more formal, or become more like a friendship as in Anne and Rosalind's case. They may be between a doctor in training and a medical student, an established medical woman with a junior doctor, or a retired physician and one just setting up her own practice. They may involve face to face meetings, phone conversations or emails. Whatever form a mentoring relationship takes, it will hopefully provide all those benefits to both parties.

To sum up, I will leave you with Anne's wise words. "Having a mentor is such a valuable experience for a mentee, and I'm sure can have profoundly positive impacts on not just the

professional trajectory of the mentee's career, but on a personal development level also. I would hope that this offers some satisfaction and inspiration to the mentor in knowing that their *life experiences* and not just their medical teaching can be of such worth to someone else."



If you are interested in being part of the VMWS mentoring program as either a mentee, mentor or even both, see the flyer in this current newsletter for more details and get in touch with the VMWS mentor program coordinators Cara Beck (VMWS Committee Member) or Alyce Wilson (VMWS Student Member).

carajbeck@gmail.com or

alyce.n.wilson@gmail.com

References

- 1. Bozeman B, Feeney MK. Toward a useful theory of mentoring a conceptual analysis and critique. Administration & Society. 2007;39(6): 719-39.
- 2. Ranga M, Gupta N, Etzkowitz H. Gender Differences at Critical Transitions in the Careers of Science, Engineering, and Mathematics Faculty. of CoGDitC, Science E, and Mathematics Faculty;, Committee on Women in Science E, and, National MCoNS, Council R, editors2010.
- 3. Taherian K, Shekarchian M. Mentoring for doctors. Do its benefits outweigh its disadvantages? Medical Teacher. 2008;30(4):e95-e9.
- 4. Ghosh R, Reio Jr TG. Career benefits associated with mentoring for mentors: A meta-analysis. Journal of Vocational Behavior. 2013;83(1): 106-16.

Event: Connect Over Coffee in Geelong

By Ms Annie Rose VMWS Student Representative Deakin University

On Thursday 24th of April, VMWS held it's first COCO event at Café Go in Geelong. The event was excitedly received by 14 medical students from the Barwon Peninsula and we were joined by two incredibly inspiring doctors from Geelong Hospital.



Dr Laurin Glasby - a senior emergency registrar who had recently returned from some fascinating volunteer work in Papua New Guinea – started off our casual chat by offering us some very insightful thoughts on the topic of sexual harassment claims in the medical Both doctors had some excellent workplace. tips for exactly where to go for help with such issues for the medical students amongst us currently on placement in Geelong. also raised the important topic of maintaining a healthy work-life balance and answered several questions about utilising our medical training overseas in a volunteer capacity, particularly in the provision of women's health needs.

Dr Jacqui Shand - a very busy mother of one who had undertaken training in several specialties – also joined us for the morning and was an excellent source of knowledge on negotiating job sharing with training colleges.



She also shared many wise words on her approach to tackling inequality in the workplace and reflected on some positive changes she had observed in this arena over the past few years, which was great to hear.

There was a lot of positive feedback about this event, with the group of women attending all very keen for similar events in the future.

Many thanks again to Jacqui and Laurin for generously giving us their mornings for the event.



Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

The Women in Surgery Committee of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) is actively encouraging medical students interested in a surgical career to join their division within the College.

There are no fees involved, and it is a great opportunity to link in with senior female surgeons for career guidance, mentoring and general support.

Contact the College at wis@surgeons.org to express your interest.

For more information please visit: http://www.surgeons.org/member-services/
interest-groups-sections/women-in-surgery/

The Victorian Medical Women's Society invites you to

Connect Over Coffee

where female medical students and female medical practitioners can exchange experiences and support



RSVP Elysia Robb - VMWS Committee Member elysiarobb@yahoo.com.au VMWS also offers female medical students the opportunity to connect with senior medical professionals through our Mentoring Program.

For more information please contact Alyce Wilson alyce.n.wilson@gmail.com and/or Cara Beck carajbeck@gmail.com

Join VMWS today and benefit from many more supportive interactions like these! Membership form: http://afmw.org.au/mages/ stories/VMWS/2014/ Membership/nvoice_2014-15_ FA-V03.pdf



Dates for your diaries...

Thursday 23rd April 10am Cafe Go 37 Bellerine St, Geelong

Saturday 25th April 10am Little Chloe 1810 Malvern Rd, Malvern East

Saturday 13th June 10am Carlton/Fitzroy

Thursday 16th July 5pm Victoria's Secret Cafe & Bar 80 Victorias Parade East Melbourne

Saturday 15th August 9:30am Bushwalking at the Dandenongs

Wednesday 16th September 5pm Austin Health Heidelberg

Saturday 31st October 10am St Vincent's Hospital

VMWS Mentoring Program



Are you interested in being part of our program? We are looking for medical women at all stages of their careers who would like to have a mentor or be a mentor and gain all the fantastic benefits discussed in our article in this newsletter.

Are you

- a doctor in training with insights to share with students
- an intern wanting advice from an established medical woman in your chosen specialty
- a retired physician with a little more time to guide and share experiences with a more junior member of the profession?

We would love to hear from all of you!

Our program will involve an initial 12 month commitment with at least one meeting in person and then continued communication of your choice including by email, phone or skype if that works for you. Mentees and mentors will be matched on specialties, medical interests and location.

We currently have students on our list who are looking for mentors in areas including:

•GP •Women's health

*Global and public *Paediatrics

health

*Neurology *Emergency medicine

Plastic surgery Anaesthetics

*Oncology *Dermatology

General surgeryIndigenous health

For more information or to register your interest, please email the Mentoring Program coordinators Cara,VMWS Committee Member (carajbeck@gmail.com) or Alyce, VMWS Student Member (alyce.n.wilson@gmail.com)

We have so many VMWS Wonderful Medical Women

Are you interested in helping nominate one of our greats to be a Member of the Order of Australia (AO)?

It doesn't have to be a daunting process.

Join Jen Harper, former EEO Officer at University of Melbourne, Jenny Standish and Wendy Langmore, from the Melba group on a public talk on

"How to nominate more women for AOs"

5:30-6:30pm Seminar Room Department of Medicine Clinical Sciences Building Royal Melbourne Hospital

This session will be followed by dinner

6:45 - 8:30pm
University House
Professors Walk
In grounds of Melbourne University
(behind the Union buiding).
\$34 for two courses and drinks.

RSVP by 9am Monday 22nd June to Judy Savige by email <u>jasavige@unimelb.edu.au</u> for the talk, the dinner or both.

VMWS Newsletter is going GREEN and moving towards an electronic newsletter platform.

If you opt to still receive your VMWS newsletter via post, please contact us at vic@afmw.org.au

or contact Senior's Representative Dr Rosalind Terry on 0427 366 516

> Newsletter Editor 2015 Dr Skye Siskos

Please contact me if you have any feedback, articles, photos or advertisements you would like to contribute to the newsletter.

PO Box 202 East Melbourne Victoria, 3002

vic@afmw.org.au

EVENT: VMWS CV and Interview Seminar

By Ms Cara Beck
VMWS Student representative
University of Melbourne

The 2015 VMWS CV and Interview seminar was held in the St Vincent's boardroom on Saturday 9th May. We had a great turn out of mostly final year students on the day, to help us tackle our intern applications and interviews. We were very fortunate to hear from our VMWS President, Dr Deb Colville who gave a wonderful talk including introducing the need for such a workshop tailored specifically to women.

I actually hadn't thought about all the extra things women need to consider when writing their applications and going to interviews. Deb discussed examples such as how to explain career gaps on your CV due to maternity leave and looking after children, and the fact that women still get asked if they are pregnant or have young children what their childcare arrangements are going to be. I liked the suggested response of "I wouldn't be applying if I didn't have my arrangements worked out"!

Deb also touched on things that would be useful to consider for future years, not just intern applications. Useful suggestions included keeping a live log of things to be included in your CV as you do them so updating it for new jobs is much easier; cultivating mentoring relationships and working on your CV with your mentor; and making sure you link experiences on your CV and cover letter with the skills and qualities you have developed.

Dr Rosalind Terry then gave us some great interview advice about how to present yourself, taking time to think through the questions and being confident in responses.

A highlight of the session was the intern and resident panel with representatives from Western Health, Eastern Health, Monash Health, Austin Health, St Vincent's Hospital, Barwon Health, Melbourne Health and the

Royal Children's Hospital. They got all the tough questions thrown at them and together gave us a great overview of what it is like to work at the different health services. It is telling, especially with bullying in medicine in the media at the moment, that the measure of a hospital's culture became how many times the interns had been yelled at! Luckily for our interns and for us final years, this seems to be becoming more of a rare occurrence.

We got lots of great feedback on the seminar and we hope that this will encourage our student members who will be in their final year in 2016 to come along to our annual CV and Interview event next year.

To our final years, well done on completing your intern applications and good luck for your upcoming interviews.

Some feedback from VMWS members:

"Thank you- very useful and advice we wouldn't have otherwise had access to!"

"More than met my
expectations! My
application will be stronger
thanks to today's event"

"Brilliant- I am very glad I attended!" Victorian Medical Women's Society's

Annual Lyceum Luncheon



Resourcefulness in the Face of Sexual Harassment in the Training Workplace

With special guest speaker

Dr Caroline Tan, Neurosurgeon

Free event for members, \$35 for non-members

Payment can be made via cheque or by EFT to BSB 033098 Account 297664

Please RSVP here or via phone to Kasia on 0411 579 048

To become a member please visit: http://afmw.org.au/vic/vmws-membership

12:15pm arrival a 12:30pm start

Lyceum Club, Ridgeway Place, Melbourne CBD



Follow us on facebook and on twitter!







Meet The Committee

Each newsletter will feature a bio about each of our amazing committee members so you get to know your VMWS.



Dr Francesca Bridge VMWS Social Secretary



Francesca Bridge is currently working as an intern at Austin Health. She first joined the Victorian Medical Women's Society as a student representative for Deakin University and now has the role of one of the social secretaries. Francesca enjoys being part of a like-minded group of women who are working together to explore the many issues facing women within the medical workforce. She completed her medical elective in Denmark last year where she was inspired by the ways in which Denmark is working to achieve social and gender equality. She is keen to find opportunities to incorporate some of these initiatives into the Australian system.

Ms Cara Beck VMWS Student Representative University of Melbourne

Cara Beck is a final year medical student at the University of Melbourne and has spent most of her clinical training at St Vincent's Hospital. Before medicine, she completed a Bachelor of Biomedical Engineering, at the University of Melbourne before going to Sydney to do her PhD in Tissue Engineering at the University of New South Wales. Her PhD research was about using biomaterials to encapsulate islets for diabetes treatment. While Cara enjoys the challenges of research, she felt she wanted to combine this with caring for patients. Cara's background in the very male environment of engineering has made her aware of gender biases and the importance of strong female role models in professional roles. Cara is very much enjoying this aspect of what VMWS provides to young women in medicine and is looking forward to passing this on to younger students.



Ms Michelle Li VMWS Student Representative Monash University



Michelle Li is in her final year of medicine at Monash University. She is currently an Associate Editor at the *Australian Medical Student Journal* and has held the role of Publications Chair on her university's medical society since 2011. She is also a passionate advocate for issues surrounding gender, race and sexuality. There are several community education projects in which she is involved, including online sexual health seminars and the delivery of violence prevention workshops to high school students in Melbourne's western suburbs. Further, she has been a guest on feminist-based panels at events such as the Melbourne Writers' Festival and Cherchez La Femme. In her spare time, she works as a fiction editor at *Voiceworks*, a national quarterly literary magazine, and volunteers on a rehab ward. Her interests include dachshunds, writing and discovering new places for brunch.



The Victorian Medical Women's Society Inc.

Membership Invoice 1 July 2014 - 30 June 2015

ABN 67 120 250 797 - Inc A0061560B (MEMBERSHIP PERIOD IS FROM 1 JULY TO 30^{TH} JUNE)

Membership Eligibility: Full membership is open to registered female medical practitioners (FMP); non-registered FMPs can join as an associate member, and Student membership is open to female medical students.

	an associate member, ar	nd Student membership is	open to female medical	
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Full Members	Rural Members (>100km from GPO)	Senior Members	Retired Member (>65 yrs)	s Student Members
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5 yrs \$680	5 yrs \$297.50	5 yrs \$510		
Donation	: <u>\$</u>			
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