

The Victorian Medical Women's Society

Founded 1896

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August 2004

President's Report



(Ed. Some things justify bumping the president's face off the front page).

The winter solstice is passed and we are once again heading towards better and brighter weather! VMWS have been busy since the last newsletter, having had a very successful members-only 'Dinner in Space' (see report overleaf). We also had a lovely luncheon at the Lyceum club, attended by 15 people, including 2 mothers' of members and 3 medical students. As you may be aware, there has been a very long tradition of a mid-winter lunch at the Lyceum Club, however, over the years, the numbers have been dwindling. The committee would be interested in feedback as to whether we should continue with the luncheon. Should you have feelings regarding this, please contact the secretariat!

Whilst discussing feedback, we hope in the next newsletter to have a questionnaire for you regarding what you would like from VMWS. We are keen for feedback regarding our dinners, speakers and newsletters and for suggestions as how we can make the society more relevant for you.

Our last newsletter prompted some detailed feedback from a member concerning the issue of Reproductive Rights. This has prompted us to think about where VMWS, AFMW and MWIA is on the issue and we will be providing some more information on this in subsequent newsletters. Are there other issues you feel strongly about that we should be reviewing?

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Upcoming Events



September 1: From CPD to Quackery – Developments in Medical Education and Training.

Please note the change of venue: Mercy Hospital for Women Boardroom

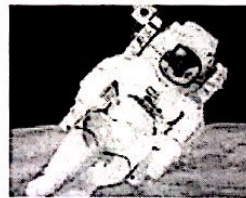
A Dinner in Space

On Tuesday 1st June VMWS held 'A Dinner in Space' with our guest speaker being Ms Caroline Rickards from RMIT. Ms Rickards is doing her PhD in aerospace physiology and based her studies revolve around how human physiology is pushed to its limits in space. Her PhD involves 3 separate studies in aerospace physiology.



There was a fantastic turnout for the dinner, which was held in the cosy function dining room at Café Noir in Armadale. There were many long-term members there, along with an impressive number of new members, students and members of our dedicated committee!

It was fascinating to hear Ms Rickards talk about her projects.



Aerospace research is not an area that is traditionally female oriented, so it is always good to see someone breaking new ground for highly educated women.

We learnt about the stress that G-forces put on the human body and how fit fighter pilots really are. Pilots go through special training to be able to withstand these incredible forces and have to be acutely aware of how their body is responding during flights. They wear special suits that help them to withstand these forces.

Ms Rickards explained that there are a few phases that pilots go through before blacking out due to G-force – loss of colour vision, then inability to move ones limbs, through to total blackout and unconsciousness. The thought of a fighter pilot blacking out while piloting a fighter plane is not one that you would want to dwell on for too long!

The set menu that Café Noir provided us with was superb and thoroughly enjoyed by all. Thanks to Ms Rickards and all who attended for making this a wonderful event.

Sarah Garner

Anyone mention an...
The VMWS doesn't want to tell you who to vote for, but does want to you to know what you are voting for. The links below are to the major party's websites, the majority of which have a policy link.

www.liberal.org.au



www.alp.org.au



www.nationals.org.au



www.democrats.org.au



www.greens.org.au

The Australian Electoral Commission website (www.aec.gov.au) has links to enable you to find your federal electorate, member and candidates.

The Women's Electoral Lobby (www.wel.org.au) has released their position statement on women's policy for your consideration.



And for the AMA's perspective (including a policy statement recently released at the National Press Club by President Bill Glassan: Key Health Issues for the 2004 Federal Election): www.ama.com.au

With no date for the election stated at the time of printing, we have at least a month to educate ourselves about our representatives' platforms. It is also our opportunity to approach our local members, make out feelings on the importance of health policy known, and to advocate for women's and children's health.

Other Organisations' Events

26/8: International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) Melbourne Supporter Evening: meet the new faces on the staff and discuss their recent project partner meeting in Cambodia. www.iwda.org.au

10/9: National Gynaecology Day www.gynsupport.com

25/11: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women www.whiteribbonday.gov.au

Marvelous Medical Women

Her Excellency,
Professor Marie Bashir AC Governor of New South Wales



Professor Marie Bashir is the first woman to be appointed Governor of New South Wales, taking up office in 2001. Prof. Bashir is of Lebanese descent and grew up in country New South Wales. In 1956 she gained her bachelor degrees in medicine and

surgery from the University of Sydney, and she received her RANZCP Fellowship in 1980.

Professor Bashir taught at the Universities of Sydney and New South Wales, increasingly working with children's services, psychiatry and mental health services, and indigenous health programs. At the time of her appointment as NSW Governor, she was Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Sydney; Area Director of Mental Health Services Central Sydney; and Senior Consultant to the Aboriginal Medical Services in Redfern Kempsey.

Her widespread interests have included juvenile justice, adolescent depression, health issues in developing countries, education for health professionals and telemedicine and new technologies for health service delivery. At the time of her appointment, Professor Bashir was a member of societies such as the Medical Women's Society of New South Wales, Amnesty International, the National Trust, the NSW Camellia Research Society and the Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Centre, as well as being a patron of the Sydney Symphony and Opera Australia. She was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1988 for her services to child and adolescent health. Professor Bashir is married to Sir Nicholas Shehadie AC OBE and together they have three children and six grandchildren. Among her many accolades is her 1971 award for Mother of the Year!

24-30/10: Refugee Week www.refugeecouncil.org.au



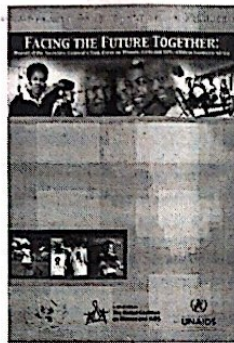
8/10: 2004 Human Rights Medal and Award (Nominations Close)
www.hreoc.gov.au/hr_awards

Help HREOC acknowledge the outstanding contribution of quiet achievers who work to promote human rights and overcome discrimination by nominating them for the above awards.

XV International AIDS Conference 11-16th July



"Facing the future together", a report of the Secretary-General's Task Force on Women and Girls report has been released. The great majority of young people aged 15-24 living with AIDS in Southern Africa are female. This report documents the realities of life for the thousands of women and girls living there who struggle to keep their families together and care for the sick as the pandemic continues to devastate their lives and economies. It calls for an end to the pervasive gender inequality that is key to propelling the spread of HIV among women. The report presents valuable empirical data on the scale and character of the pandemic in the nine countries in Southern Africa with the highest HIV prevalence rates, identifying six areas where urgent intervention is needed and calling for a shift in how women are perceived and treated.



At the opening ceremony of the conference, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said empowering women and girls is a top priority if the fight against HIV and AIDS is to be won. He called for girls' education, job opportunities and land and inheritance rights for women and girls, as well as full access to practical means to protect themselves against the virus.

The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS hosted a special session at the conference, 'The Female Face of AIDS', that brought together prominent women leaders to discuss some of the Global Coalition's focus areas.



A special screening of the documentary "Women are..." was also held. The women featured describe the hardships they face in light of the growing AIDS threat, but also provide concrete examples of how they have managed to overcome these obstacles and empower women to fight the epidemic. The 52-minute film was produced by Mondofragilis with the support of the World YWCA and UNAIDS.

For more detail on the Conference and resulting policy:
www.aids2004.org womenandaids.unaids.org
www.unaids.org/bangkok2004
www.unicef.org/publications/index_22222.html

President's Report cont.

In the wider sphere of issues for Medical Women remains that of National Registration, and we will be trying to keep you up-dated through the Newsletter. The National Council of Women Victoria, with whom we are affiliated, are pursuing medical issues in aged care and depression and risk behaviours in adolescents.

Other news includes the VMWS archives, which are going to be held by the State Library for us. A few of us are interested in seeing the material, which as been carefully cared for by Dr. Merrilyn Murnane, before it goes off. Let us know if you wish to join us!

The only remaining new is to remind you of our next dinner From Quackery to CPD September 1st 2004 and our AGM in November.

As for me, thanks to the wonders of modern obstetrics, both Caeden and I have survived childbirth, and we are now surviving each other! None of my first-hand experiences of 'obstetric interventions', which I had wanted to avoid but didn't, turned out to be as bad as I thought they might be! I am pleased to be able to say that so far, motherhood is exceeding my expectations. I'm not too sure how my brain is going though...

Desiree Yap

MUMee: Mother's early emotional experiences and breastfeeding.



Dr Jan Coles is interviewing women who experienced child sexual assault (CSA) by a family member about breastfeeding and mothering a new baby. The research involves two in depth interviews after the birth of a baby, the first at around 4-6 weeks postpartum and again between 8-12 weeks post partum. It does not matter whether participants are still breastfeeding or not. The purpose of this research is to better understand the breastfeeding experience of young mothers who where sexually abused in the past by a family member. A plain language explanation is available for your information from jan.coles@med.monash.edu.au.

Dr Jan Coles' background is as a lactation consultant and in general practice. She currently works in academic general practice and research. If you are know women interested in participating please get them to contact Jan for more information on 8575 2226.

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission: Recent Statements

www.hreoc.gov.au

“Not one child should remain in detention, says Human Rights Commissioner”

Human Rights Commissioner Dr Sev Ozdowski cautiously welcomed the Federal Government's move towards removing more children from immigration detention.

Immigration Minister Senator Amanda Vanstone yesterday announced that only one child of an asylum seeker who arrived in Australia by boat was still in a detention centre on the Australian mainland.



The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission recommended the release of all children who were in immigration detention when its report - A last resort? National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention - was tabled in Federal Parliament on May 13. The deadline for release was June 10.

"Senator Vanstone's announcement is an important acknowledgement of the plight of the children who were the subject of the Commission's recent National Inquiry," said Dr Ozdowski. "It is also recognition of the mental health damage inflicted on these children by long periods in detention. I am glad that the Government has continued to remove children from detention and I am looking forward to the day when no child will be in any form of detention in Australia."

“Commissioner calls on Government to remove Australia's reservation to CEDAW”



Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner Pru Goward has called on the federal Government to remove its reservation to a key part of an international convention on the rights of women.

The Australian Government ratified the United Nations' *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) in 1983, but included a reservation to Article 11(2)(b) because it did not meet the requirement to introduce paid maternity leave as a means of redressing discrimination against women, ensuring their right to work and supporting them in their mothering role.

Call For SDRME Research Review Papers Proposals

www.sdrme.org



The Society of Directors of Research in Medical Education (SDRME) is issuing an international call for research review paper proposals. SDRME is interested in review papers that make a substantial contribution to the advancement of medical education practice, theory or research. Reviews are expected to be completed within two-years. Up to US\$2000 is provided to the author upon completion of the review paper. Proposals are due September 17, 2004.

Proposal and Submission Guidelines

1. Length of Proposal: approximately 500 words.
2. Structure of the Proposal:
 - a. Importance of the review topic to the practice of medical education
 - b. Methods to be used to complete the review (e.g., meta-analysis, thematic review, literature sources to be searched, inclusion/exclusion criteria to be used.)
 - c. Importance/Impact of review on the practice of medical education
3. The submission must include a two (2) page abbreviated curriculum vitae of each listed co-author.
4. Submissions must be submitted electronically (an email attachment) by the above deadline to the email below.

Criteria Used in Evaluating Proposals

- a. Importance of review topic to practice of medical education
- b. Critique of methods
- c. Potential impact of review
- d. Potential for completion in 1-2 years

The review form used for selection can be obtained from the attached email address.

Examples of Completed/Published SDRME Invited Reviews

1. Albanese M, Mitchell S. Problem-based learning: A review of literature on its outcomes and implementation issues. *Acad Med* 1993;68:52-81.
2. Bowen JL, Irby D. Assessing quality and costs of education in the ambulatory setting: a review of the literature. *Acad Med*. 2002 Jul;77(7):621-80.

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Rural women GPs...

Are you a female GP who lives and works in rural Victoria? Would you welcome the opportunity to gain QA and CPD points and form professional networks while doing so?

If you answered yes, then you are invited to participate in a research study that aims to understand rural women GPs' experience of continuing education and training. The research project is being conducted by a Master of Public Health student at LaTrobe University, and the outcome of the research will form part of the final thesis.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to commit a maximum of 1 ½ hrs for an interview or focus group, to be conducted in a location and at a time that is convenient to you. Participants may choose to be involved in both.

All interested participants will be assisted in forming 'small group learning' associations with other rural women GPs, which, under the RACGP QA & CPD program, can earn you up to 20 'group 2' points for the triennium.

If you would like to know more, please contact Luisa Abiuso on 9616 8741 or sabiuso@hotmail.com. An information brochure will then be sent to you, however, you will be under no obligation to participate if you call.

Contact Us!

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