Future shock to be investigated

By JUDE RYAN

Monash University’s Centre for Ambulance and Paramedic Studies (MUCAPS) has been awarded a $130,000 grant to identify patients who are at risk of major trauma but who do not initially present with obvious injuries at the accident scene.

The study is in conjunction with the Metropolitan Ambulance Service and Rural Ambulance Victoria, which are part of a multidisciplinary steering committee to guiding the project.

Mr Boyle said the key issue was how to best treat people in the ‘mechanism of injury’ category and whether the current American-derived criteria best suits the Australian trauma model.

“Where there is no physiological or anatomical evidence of injury, ambulance paramedics apply criteria known as ‘mechanism of injury’.”

The MUCAPS study, funded by the Victorian Trauma Foundation, an arm of the Transport Accident Commission, will investigate the value of the criteria in establishing risk of major trauma.

Criteria that are likely precursors to major trauma currently include vehicle rollover, motor bike or cyclist impact at greater than 30 km/h, high-speed car accident, same vehicle fatally, extended extraction time and fall from a height greater than five metres.

Mr Boyle said the key issue was how to best treat people in the ‘mechanism of injury’ category and whether the current American-derived criteria best suits the Australian trauma model.

“The current criteria would suggest that they are still candidates for major trauma. Do you transport them to hospital even if they appear fine? In some instances, these accident victims refuse transportation to hospital.”

New health institute the way of the future

A new super research organisation will bring together more than 1000 health and medical researchers working in the Clayton precinct to create one of Australia’s largest medical and biomedicine research complexes.

The Monash Institutes of Health (MIH), launched last month by Federal Health Minister Dr Michael Wooldridge, will consolidate expertise in the fields of DNA sequencing, biotechnology, embryonic stem cells, diabetes, drug discovery, cancer research, population health statistics and clinical practice.

The new body pools the research expertise of Monash University, Southern Health, Prince Henry’s Institute of Medical Research and the International Diabetes Institute.

Researchers from these institutions will work collaboratively on joint research initiatives to share expensive infrastructure, develop bids for joint research funds, build links with commercial partners, and develop new research and training facilities.

Faculty of Medicine dean Professor Nick Saunders said the strength of the new institute lay in the combined expertise of the individual members, in its ability to position itself as global leaders in the rapidly expanding biotechnology industry,” he said.

“Mill is a high-service facility, taking research from the molecular through to the clinical stage to ultimately be of major benefit to the bottom line.”

Dr Wooldridge said the MIH was a very important for Monash because biotechnology was becoming increasingly important for Melbourne.

“Medical research here in Melbourne.”

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Traditionally, nurses have played a central role in decision-making in the healthcare industry. Doctors diagnose illness and disease, perform surgery and prescribe medication — and, in a hospital setting, because of constraints, may hurriedly see patients for only short periods. Nurses, on the other hand, spend whole shifts caring for a particular patient, and consequently often gain a better insight into and understanding of the patient's concerns and desires than doctors do.

As a result, it seems obvious that nurses should play a more prominent role in ethical decision-making than they have done in the past. They are aware if a patient is worried about a particular course of treatment or outcome and are in a position to inform the doctor who should listen and take the views on board.

When modern nursing began, virtually all nurses were women and almost all doctors were men. Like women in the wider community, nurses were typically considered the helpmates of men, dependent functionaries who aided doctors in their work. And despite the move of more men into nursing, it remains a fact that most nurses are women. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that nurses are struggling not only for improved status, wages and working conditions, but also, and more fundamentally, for recognition as a profession that has specific ethic.

Recent philosophical attempts to introduce a feminine 'ethics of care' into nursing — that is, the view that women are inherently more caring than men and have a natural desire to nurse the sick, raise children, homemakers etc. — were flawed. Why? Because while the various proponents of this strongly North American philosophy tell nurses they ought to care, they do not define what 'caring' actually means.

So nurses are left wondering: what should they do when confronted by a moral dilemma? How should they 'care' appropriately? And how do they justify their actions to doctors who may not appreciate their moral judgements?

The problems arise, of course, because 'caring' can mean different things to different nurses. Faced with a severely disabled newborn infant, one nurse may feel the caring thing to do is to allow 'nature to take its course' and let the infant die. Encouraging and promoting a caring attitude, then, is simply not enough. It's fine the industry had deep discussion, reflection and agreement on the need for decision-making in such situations to be based.

This emphasis on caring also creates another problem. Patients want professionalism from nurses. They want their physical needs attended to by a responsive and sympathetic nurse — they don't want to become best friends with the nurse.

Nurses should play a more prominent role in ethical decision making. Picture: GREG FORD

There needs to be great discussion in the health care field about principles and values and the roles nurses, the otherwise, nurses are at risk of ending up in the same situation as past generations of nurses — bereft of responsibilities in a hospital setting.

Helga Kuhse is an honorary senior research fellow at Monash University. Her current research focuses on ethical issues raised by new reproductive technologies, including cloning, and forms the basis of a paper for the World Health Organisation. She is also the author of the book Caring: Nurses, Women and Ethics.

**Discovery surprises international scientists**

**BY SANDRA BUCIOZ**

Scientists at Monash University's Institute of Reproduction and Development have surprised their international colleagues with an exciting discovery that could impact on the treatment of hepatitis, MS and certain types of cancer.

The Monash team has discovered the activities of a soluble receptor molecule that offers a clue to better understanding how interferon works in the body and possibly how it can be used for more effective therapy with fewer side-effects.

The discovery is perhaps one of the most significant since interferon therapy was introduced in the 1980s for the treatment of hepatitis, MS and certain types of cancer.

The Monash team has discovered that interferons to get their message across to the cell. Receptors are necessary for interferons to function properly. They enable the interferon 'signal' to enter the cell. Up until now, it was believed the receptors were embedded in the cell barrier, but the newly discovered soluble receptors occur in significant quantities floating around the target cells.

Reflecting the significance of the discovery, the research findings were presented at two international conferences, where they have received a positive response from international scientists.

The discovery was made by Associate Professor Paul Hertzog, Dr Catherine Owczarek and postgraduate student Matthew Hardy at the Institute's Centre for Functional Genomics and Human Disease.

Dr Hertzog described the findings as 'very significant', particularly because interferon therapy has been around for so long.

"We thought we knew all the variables — it's exciting to discover something new at this stage," said Dr Hertzog, who hopes the findings can be used to dramatically improve the efficacy of interferon therapy.

Interferon therapy can sometimes be hit-and-miss in that some people benefit while others do not, suffering side-effects including drowsiness, headache, vomiting and general flu-like symptoms.

Produced predominantly by white blood cells, interferons primarily make cells resistant to viruses, inhibit tumour growth and stimulate the immune system. They act at local sites of disease or can travel around the body to act on other target cells.

Receptors are necessary for interferons to get their message into target cells, by helping the interferon 'signal' to the cell. Until now, it was believed the receptors were embedded in the cell barrier, but the newly discovered soluble receptors occur in significant quantities floating around the target cells.

Dr Hertzog said the Monash discovery explained why interferons have such different impacts on the body. He added, however, that much research still lay ahead.

**Nurses: the patient experts**

**OPINION**

**BY DENIS BROWN**

From hunting on the Mornington Peninsula in the late 1860s to relaxing at inland resorts in Northern Queensland, Australians have always loved holidaying in their own country. Professor Steve Garnett, from the National Centre for Australian Studies at Monash University, who is author of Holiday Business: Tourism in Australia since 1850, said the tourist industry, which today generates $16.8 billion a year, had humble beginnings.

"In the late nineteenth century, Tasmanian was probably the most important long-holiday destination. Melbourne in summer could be unpleasant, and many middle-class Melburnians could travel to Tassie to escape the heat," he said.

While camping was also very popular during this period, Professor Garnett said tourism was more of a side pursuit, with middle and upper class guests staying at guesthouses and hotels.

According to Professor Garnett and his co-author, Associate Professor Jim Davidson from the Victoria University of Technology, the growth of most tourist destinations can be traced to a dramatic increase in car ownership during the late 1950s and early 1960s, allowing Australians to travel further afield.

"Air travel was still very expensive. Owning a car was much more affordable, and mass car ownership encouraged an exodus of people from Melbourne to Sydney and Queensland's beach resorts and a growth in the popularity of camping," he said.

Professor Garnett said that when the price of airfares dropped in the 1970s and 1980s, domestic tourism — and tourist regions such as the Gold Coast and Cairns — boomed.

"Australia now attracts almost five million international visitors per annum. Basically, this is because of cheaper air travel, the particular the 707 and 747 airlines," he said.

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So football is more than a game, research reveals

By Allison Hardings

Australian Rules football might not survive unless greater efforts are made to keep strong links with fans, according to a Monash University researcher.

Dr David Nadel says political and social issues prevent the game from being marketed as well as it can be.

In his thesis, "The commercialisation and professionalisation of Australian football 1975-1996", Dr Nadel says the suburban relationship between football supporters and their clubs has been an essential component of the peculiar strength of the sport.

"Some of the strategies adopted in the march to corporate professionalisation place the future of Australian football at risk," he says.

Nadel says the suburban relationship between football supporters and their clubs has been an essential component of the peculiar strength of the sport.

"Some of the strategies adopted in the march to corporate professionalisation place the future of Australian football at risk," he says.

"There are really only three societies that have managed to keep their own code of football - Northern America, Ireland and Australia (grid iron, soccer football and Australian Rules)." Nadel says.

"There has to be a reason for minority regional codes to survive, and it's if the right things are done, if some effort is made to keep a real link with the fans, then we might have a national game."

But there is also a risk that fans will drift off to international options and that soccer and rugby union could sound the death knell for the Australian Rules, much as the AFL has lost ground to non-Victorian football leagues, such as Tasmania.

"The people who transformed the AFL were basically businessmen, and they've tended to adopt not only an American model, but also a business model," he says.

"In this busy terms, that's how it works - we want to keep the costs and maximise profits, and we want to create a competition that everyone wants to watch."

"There's a problem with doing these things in that you don't look at the cultural aspects, and by not looking at the cultural aspects, they've created an entertainment model that is threatened by the whole globalisation of world sports."

In the final analysis, Dr Nadel says, "the success of the game depends on the number of people who go through the gate or sit down to watch it on television."

"They won't do that unless they have teams they can identify with and a sense that football is important," he says. "If the right things are done, if some effort is made to keep a real link with the fans, then we might have a national game."

Age no barrier to PhD success

By June Yu

At age 80, Dr Gwendoline Carlos has become the oldest woman on record to graduate with a PhD from Monash University.

Dr Carlos took nine years to complete her PhD in Education, in which she examined the development of deaf children in Victoria after 1944.

Prior to that, she spent three years writing a pre-1945 history of the Victorian Deaf and Dumb Institute in St Kilda Road (now the Victorian Services for Deaf Children) for her Master's Education qualification.

Dr Carlos investigated influencing factors on the education of deaf children - such as the influx of new ideas from immigrants and the government taking responsibility for deaf education in the 1950s, which led to more schools, organisations and support for the deaf in Victoria.

She also outlined the deaf power movement, in which the deaf community joined to keep themselves separate from the hearing world. This made them reluctant to embrace methods of communication and technology that would give them better access to the hearing world, such as the cochlear implant and teaching the deaf to speak instead of relying on sign language.

Dr Carlos said she decided to undertake further study after retiring from teaching at Methodist Ladies College in 1982.

"I had a bit of a flair for writing and I was interested in research - and I had the time then to go back to university," she said.

"I believe that as you get older, you gain a wisdom you didn't have before mentally and physically."

Inprint

The Lettters, Volume II: 1954-1966
Edited by Clive Preston and Dr Jan Kolm
Published by Melbourne University Press
RRP: $58

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Henry Handel Richardson, well known for her trilogy The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney and The Gifting of Wisdom, is one of Australia's best-loved writers yet little has been written on the woman behind the pseudonym.

Two Monash academics have assembled the last of Richardson's prolific correspondence, completing a series designed to provide insight into the writer's private life.

This third volume, The Letters, sees the widowed Richardson move to the Sussex village where she lived until her death. With World War II dominating this period of her life, her letters portray a strained and weakened woman. Her last letter is a postcard note to Mary Kerry, her Melbourne-based childhood friend.

Series editors Professor Clive Preston and Associate Professor Bruce Steele of Monash University's English department have set up the Henry Handel Richardson Project, the largest project ever undertaken on an Australian author.

The Australian Century

Edited by Robert Manne
Published by Text Publishing
RPP: $12.95

At the beginning of a new century and with celebrations marking one hundred years of Australian federation, there is a growing interest in the nation's history.

The Australian Century analyses some of the most crucial political struggles of the past 100 years, from the conscription debates of World War I to the impact of globalisation during the Hawke and Keating governments highlighting its impact on the development of Australia.

Dr Brian Atwood and Associate Professor Andrew Markus from the History Department at Monash University co-authored the chapter "The Fight for Aboriginal Rights", which outlines the battle for the recognition of indigenous rights.

Management of Financial Institutions

By Warren Hogan, Kathleen Aarons, Chris Jones, Andrew Brown, Deborah Robertson and Michael Saville
Published by John Wiley and Sons
RPP: $74.95

Management strategies that worked for financial institutions a decade ago can no longer cope with the ever-increasing range of banking options, such as internet banking and automated call centres.

Management of Financial Institutions is a comprehensive overview of the current Australian financial institutions sector. It looks at a number of today's management policies including the regulatory environment in which financial institutions operate and strategies for control of capital.

The book is an Australian adaptation of the US book Bank Management by George Hempl and David Simonson. One of the authors, Professor Michael Skidelsky, is in banking at Monash University and is vice-president of the Asia-Pacific Finance Association.

The Age are proud supporters of Monash University.

For home delivery phone 13 27 82.
Performing arts take centre stage

BY SUE McALISTER

Large-scale theatre productions from some of Australia's best-known companies are returning to Monash after a two-year hiatus.

The manager of Monash's Performing Arts Precinct, Ms Jan Clancy, said this year's program would be bigger than ever, with the presentation of some exciting new programs and the reappearance of several familiar ones.

Ms Clancy said the range of programs would cater to staff, students and the wider community, as well as to secondary school students.

There will be free lunchtime concerts every week, top-class drama, literary forums and master classes with leading performance artists.

The program will include The Bell Shakespeare Company's performance of The Tempest at the end of July, which will be sponsored by the School of Business Systems.

Get the low-down on art

The University Gallery is showcasing its most recent acquisitions in a special exhibition called Low-down.

Running until 17 March, the display features works by leading contemporary Australian artists acquired during the past three years. The exhibition features paintings, photography, sculpture, prints and video works.

Low-down will include two paintings by Archibald Prize winner Adam Cullen and Robert Owen's painted steel works.

Also on show will be Mike Parr's bronze and beeswax sculpture 'Bronze Lane' and James Reason's cluster piece 'Sorcerball Drapped from 35,000 Feet' and Louise Weaver's 'Rock Wallaby'.

Artists' talks on 14 March at 1.30 pm include John Meade, Lauren Berkowitz, Vera Moller and Louise Weaver.

Established in 1961, the Monash University Collection aims to provide a forum for emerging Australian artists and comprises more than 1000 works by 25 artists.

The free exhibition is a must for students and school groups.

For more information, contact the University Gallery on (03) 9905 4217.

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Need further information? Visit the Monash University Service Centre, Campus Centre, Clayton. Ext 54130.

www.edcredit.com.au

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Left: Gian Vitale's Seagull Series No. 3'

'994 features at the exhibition.