

Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine is the largest department within the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Monash University, with a focus towards disease and disability prevention. As one of our long-term goals of strengthening our 'methodology core' of epidemiology, biostatistics and data-management, we are progressively increasing our capacity to undertake high quality clinical, public health and health services research. The Clinical Informatics and Data-Management Unit and our Biostatistics Unit is capable of handling large health related data sets with high levels of sophistication, which has significantly contributed to our research performance. The research program of the department includes both clinical and public health research which takes place in remote communities, workplaces, ambulances and hospital wards internationally and in Australia.

The department has a strong research funding budget of \$25 million, which includes NHMRC and ARC grant funding exceeding \$10 million. Thirty-five new research grants started last year and the department currently holds 114 research grants, which provides a strong research environment for 2011 and beyond. We were successful in securing seven NHMRC grants in the 2010 Project Grant Round and three NHMRC Career Development Fellowships. Furthermore, several staff members received awards and distinctions for their achievements. Professor Flavia Cicuttini was awarded the Parr Prize for excellence in rheumatology research during the Annual Rheumatology Association meeting. Dr Deborah Zion and Associate Professor Bebe Loff were finalists in the 2010 Eureka Prize. Dr Elizabeth Barr received the Mollie Holman Medal for the best doctoral thesis of the faculty. Judy Gold was first in the faculty Three Minute Thesis competition. Professor Peter Cameron was elected Chair of the International Society of Emergency Physicians.

During 2010, our staff (including adjuncts) authored a record number of publications. Of these, five were published in *The Lancet*, four in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and one in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Research Highlights

Opening of the Michael Kirby Centre for Public Health and Human Rights

The Kirby Centre, named after the eminent jurist and High Court judge, The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG, was officially opened in 2010. Mr Kirby is a renowned human rights activist and was recently appointed to the new Global Commission on HIV and the Law. The centre was opened officially by Michel Sidibé, a UN High Commissioner. The centre is headed by Associate Professor Bebe Loff and focuses on human rights and public health, as a collaborative venture between scientists, lawyers, medical practitioners and academics at the school.

Appointment of Chair in Global Health

Professor Ajay Mahal was appointed to the Alan and Elizabeth Finkel Chair in Global Health. Born in India, Ajay holds a Bachelor of Economics degree from University of Delhi and a Masters degree.

He moved into the area of health economics during his PhD studies at Columbia University, New York. As a consultant and adviser, Ajay has worked with the Harvard Institute for International Development in Gaza and West Bank, and the Indian government. He is an expert on issues related to health financing, social determinants of health, and economics of HIV/AIDS. This position was made possible through the philanthropy of Dr Elizabeth Finkel and Dr Alan Finkel, Chancellor of Monash University.

Commencement of the ASPREE Trial

Facilitated by a grant from the Victorian Cancer Agency, the ASPREE Trial commenced in 2010. Regional centres were established at Geelong, Warrnambool, Shepparton, Bendigo, Ballarat and Traralgon. ASPREE Biobank, funded by CSIRO, was of substantial value to the trial. Anne Murray (United States collaborator) and Brenda Kirpach (study coordinator), visited and shared their expertise during the trial, which we greatly value and appreciate.

Clinical Registries

The development and promotion of clinical registries has become an important agenda of the department. Although these registries are primarily used for improving the safety and quality of healthcare, they have significant potential in other forms of health services research and clinical investigations. Accordingly, under the outstanding leadership of Dr Sue Evans, new registries were established for burns, prostate cancer and lung cancer. Associate Professor Chris Reid, Carl Costello and Angela Brennan, together with our Data Centre, have contributed significantly to improving the ability to manage and develop such registries.

The Kirby Centre was officially launched on 29 August 2010 by Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), centre. Michael Kirby is pictured front left.



Postgraduate Students

89 PhD Students
12 Other Doctoral Students
371 Masters Students

Publications

420 Journal Articles
2 Books
17 Book Chapters