2008 ARC LINKAGE PROJECTS SUCCESS (ROUND 2)

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL SUCCESSFUL ARC LINKAGE PROJECTS GRANT RECIPIENTS AND THEIR TEAMS IN THEIR RECENT SUCCESS.

We are delighted in the 75% success rate we received from our ARC 2008, round 2 Linkage Project submissions which is well above the 42.8% national average. This success is largely due to the hard work of many staff in establishing or building on collaborations with partner organisations and/or other universities and preparing thoroughly-reviewed quality applications.

LP0883920: A/Prof Danny L Ben-Moshe; Prof GJ Hugo; A/Prof LV Baldassar; Dr TA Joiner; Dr S Francis; Mr O Andreevski
Project Title: Australian diasporas and brain gain: exploring current and potential transnational linkages.
2008: $55,000
2009: $110,000
2010: $87,500
2011: $32,500
APA(I) Award(s): 1
Collaborating/Partner Organisation(s):
Victorian Multicultural Commission
Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues
Post Office Box 480
Bulleen, Victoria 3105
Embassy of the Republic of Macedonia
COASIT Italian Historical Society
Italian/Australian Welfare and Cultural Centre
Council for International Trade and Commerce SA Inc
Project Summary:
The research will investigate current and potential future roles of diasporas in both Australia and overseas in facilitating trade and investment. The study will examine their political, cultural and kinship ties with homelands and map the geography of seven diasporas in Australia. This will provide new data that describes the character, motivations and movements of diasporas in Australia. Data analysis will determine the current and potential role diaspora play in adding value to Australian society through ‘brain gain’ and ‘circulation’ versus ‘brain drain’. Findings will inform migration and social policy aimed at maximising benefits of migration.

LP0884146: Prof Ian Thomas; Prof Dot Bruck
Project Title: The role of location on the effectiveness of smoke alarms.
2008: $25,000
2009: $25,000
Collaborating/Partner Organisation(s):
Australian Building Codes Board
Project Summary:
Smoke alarms in buildings are required by the Building Code of Australia (BCA), but the current requirements are less than optimal. This project will provide the basis for optimisation of smoke alarms and the number, interconnection and positioning of smoke alarms in residential buildings. This is expected to lead to reductions in fire fatalities, injuries and property loss.

LP0883282: A/Prof Linda Y Zou; Dr Gayle E Morris; Prof Dr H Song; Mr JT Martin
Project Title: High performance conductive mesoporous carbon electrodes: a low energy desalination alternative.
2008: $22,500
2009: $45,000
**OFF-PEAK TOURISM AND THE SOCIAL IMPACTS ON COMMUNITIES ALONG THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD**

The Centre for Tourism and Services Research (CTSR) has been awarded research funding as part of an application made to the Australian Tourism Development Program by Great Ocean Road Marketing. The Program is funded by AusIndustry and the research projects are key components of the total Program which obtained over $300,000. The CTSR will be undertaking research specifically on the issues surrounding off-peak tourism, the social impacts of tourism on communities along the Great Ocean Road and the sustainability of these destinations. The findings from the off-peak tourism research component will inform the Great Ocean Road marketing strategy, while the research into the social impacts of tourism on the communities will build on earlier work done in the Surf Coast Shire. The findings from this part of the study will assist the local tourism authorities in monitoring and managing the growth of tourism in the region. The projects are due for completion by mid-2009.

**NEW WEIGHT LOSS HOPE FOR SPEEDING UP METABOLISM**

AUSTRALIAN SCIENTISTS HAVE DISCOVERED A WAY TO SPEED UP THE METABOLISM OF MICE, PAVING THE WAY FOR A NEW THERAPY WHICH COULD TRIM DOWN OVERWEIGHT HUMANS.

A team of Melbourne researchers have found they can manipulate the fat cells of rodents so they metabolise fat faster and carry up to 60 per cent less body fat than other mice in the lab.

Study leader Dr Michael Mathai from Victoria University said the discovery suggested that currently available drugs used for other conditions could help treat obesity and diabetes.

“If successful this would be the first drug to do what so far only exercise can do - speed up your metabolism,” Dr Mathai said.

The researchers investigated how blocking angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE), a hormone implicated in hypertension, would affect weight loss. They bred mice deficient in ACE and found they weighed 20 per cent less and had about 60 per cent less body fat, particularly in the abdomen, compared to normal mice.

“They ate the same as their normal litter mates but they had a higher metabolic rate and burnt the fat and therefore there’s less excess calories to store as fat,” Dr Mathai said.

“And they don’t eat more to make up for it so they just stay skinny.”

The ACE-deficient mice also gained less fat as they aged, indicating their higher metabolism was sustained throughout life.

And they cleared glucose faster than normal mice, suggesting a lower susceptibility to diabetes, according to the study published in this month in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Hormone-blocking drugs known as ACE inhibitors are already available for the treatment of hypertension and they may be able to be adapted to treat obesity and diabetes, Dr Mathai said.

“However, such a weight loss drug would need to be accompanied by a healthy diet and lifestyle to achieve and maintain weight loss, and to reduce the likelihood of developing diabetes,” he said.

Such a therapy could be available in five years if trials were successful, Dr Mathai said.

In the meantime, questions still remained concerning the full mechanism underlying the changes in body composition and metabolism when ACE was blocked, he said.

“The next step in our research is to find out if the brain is responsible for increasing metabolism, or whether it is from a direct effect on the main body organs involved in fat metabolism,” the researcher said.

**FIGURE 1C JAYASOORIYA ET AL, 2008**

Wild-type

ACE -/-
ICEPA: VICHEALTH – DISCOVERY GRANT SCHEME SUCCESS

Project title: Information Communication Technology (ICT) use and access in CALD communities for communicating on health and community wellbeing.

Amount: $75,000 over 1 year.

Members of research team: Professor Hurriyet Babacan; Associate Professor Helen Borland; and Dr Ben O’Mara.

Project aims and key outcomes: The aim of this project is to understand the challenges and opportunities that CALD communities face in utilising information technologies in relation to messages of health and wellbeing. A final project report will be produced which details research findings and a series of policy and practice options for the applications of information technologies in health promotion communication for CALD communities more generally.

BOOK RELEASE:
OVERTRAINING ATHLETES – PERSONAL JOURNEYS IN SPORT

Overtraining: Personal Journeys in Sport seeks to communicate the complex subject of overtraining to help athletes, coaches, parents, and sport science professionals understand the dangers of overtraining and take steps toward prevention. Using history and research, current experts’ perspectives, and athletes’ personal experiences, Overtraining Athletes identifies forces that push athletes to overtrain by sharing the struggles of those athletes and the sport professionals who seek to help them.

The text employs a nonlinear structure, allowing the flexibility to sample chapters from each of its four parts based on interest and level of knowledge about the topic. By presenting the phenomenon of overtraining from a variety of perspectives and with varying degrees of technicality, the book engages a wide range of readers while presenting significant research and studies in the area. Each of the four parts of the text displays a distinct method for discovering how overtraining affects athletes, coaches, parents, and professionals.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean O. Richardson, PhD, completed his doctoral work in sport psychology at Victoria University (Melbourne, Australia) in 2006. His dissertation research focused on the risk factors for athletic overtraining, stress–life balance, and injury.

Mark B. Andersen, PhD, is a professor in the School of Human Movement, Recreation and Performance at Victoria University (Melbourne, Australia). He received his PhD in psychology with a minor in exercise and sport sciences from the University of Arizona at Tucson in 1988.

Tony Morris, PhD, is a professor in the School of Human Movement, Recreation and Performance at Victoria University (Melbourne, Australia). He received his doctoral degree from the University of Leeds in England in 1984.

The book will be available from Human Kinetics Australia in the middle of June. For further details please visit:


OUTSTANDING EXAMINERS’ REPORTS - MR SUMIT CHAMPRASIT

The Office for Postgraduate Research would like to warmly congratulate Sumit Champrasit, Doctor of Education candidate, School of Education, who recently received three outstanding examiners reports. All reports were glowing and passed the thesis with no changes required.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY

ARTHITIS AUSTRALIA 2009 RESEARCH GRANTS

Applications for grants valued between $10,000 and $50,000 for one year are now sought to be used for research into the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of arthritis.

The objectives of the research and professional education program are:

• To support specific research projects into arthritis and other musculoskeletal disorders
• To support and foster the career development of scientists and clinical investigators committed to research into arthritis and allied disorders

There are four categories:

• Fellowships
• Scholarships
• Grants in Aid and Project Grants
• ARA Practitioner Fellowship

Awards are available to clinical, scientific and allied health professionals who work in universities, hospitals or recognised research institutes.

Applicants must obtain guidelines information and a research application form from

www.arthritisaustralia.com.au

The closing date for applications with the Office for Research is 4 July 2008 and with the agency on 5.00 pm, Saturday 12th July 2008. Applications after this date will not be considered.

For further information please visit the website or email enquiries to Arthritis Australia on info@arthritisaustralia.com.au

THANK YOU to all who contributed to the content of the Research Matters bulletin.