

FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION



Carolyn Ward

The Friends of The Foundation was launched at Government House in November 2005. Joan-Mary Longcroft QSM was the Inaugural Chair. She stepped down at the end of 2009 to be succeeded by Carolyn Ward.

The members of the 2013 Committee are:

Carolyn Ward (Chair), Leonie Lawson, Joan-Mary Longcroft, Marie Quinn and Linda Snell (Minute Secretary).

We welcome the following new Friends of the Foundation:

- Paul & Toni Cooney
- Rex & Ann Paddy
- Paul & Julie Keeling

2013 END OF YEAR FUNCTION AT OPERA FACTORY

The Xmas production at the Opera Factory will be a Gala Celebration on 12/13 December. We will take a similar number of tickets to last year (30) on Friday, 13 December. If you're interested in attending let me know, giving your name, contact details and how many tickets you require, and I'll put you on the list. My email address is cmward@xtra.co.nz, phone no (09) 520 0971.

BECOME A FRIEND

Donations to the Friends are tax deductible. Friends pay \$25.00 annual gift for an individual or a concession rate of \$40.00 per couple. If you are already a Friend and have not yet renewed, please send us a cheque to renew your membership. If you are not a Friend already, why not join? Contact Carolyn on (09) 520 0971 for further information.

FRIENDS FUND-RAISERS

As advised in the May newsletter, this year we chose "**The Cat's Meow**", a 1920's Jazz Era drama, from the 2013 repertoire of Howick Little Theatre. This turned out to be a popular choice and it was so professionally executed. The play was set on board William Randolph Hearst's lavish 280' yacht, *The Oneida*, off the California coast in 1924 and was based on a true story. It was certainly vintage 1920's, reflected in the costumes and the dancing!!

SUMMER STUDENTS' PRESENTATION – supported by the NZ Association of Gerontology

This year the Summer Students' presentation followed the AGM of the NZAG held on Monday, 19th August at Massey University Albany. Joan-Mary Longcroft, Linda Snell and I attended from the Friends Committee. We particularly enjoyed meeting the two students and seeing their presentations. There will be a fuller report elsewhere in this newsletter but brief details are:



Robert Carr

The effect of environmental factors, such as temperature and humidity, on hospitalization rates of elderly people. The study is part of LILACS – "Life & Living in Advanced Age" a Cohort Study.



Stephen Zhuo Chen

A study of the epidemiology of Diverticular Disease in New Zealand.

We were so taken aback by the alarming rates of acute public hospitalizations that I requested a copy of Stephen's slides. Diverticular Disease seldom leads to death but if it's increasing, as it seems to be, then we should be looking more carefully at the information we have about how it could be better managed, especially self-managed, and the causes.



The HOPE Foundation for Research on Ageing healthy older people

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2013



EDITORIAL

Professor David Richmond,
Inaugural Professor of Geriatric Medicine,
The University of Auckland.
Founder and Chair of The Foundation

Just a few weeks ago, the results of an international 'happiness survey' – the United Nations Global Report on Happiness - were released. The researchers found that when a variety of social, personal and economic factors were taken into account, New Zealanders were ranked the 13th happiest world citizens. The five happiest countries were the Scandinavian ones. Of interest is the fact that the Scandinavian countries support some of the oldest populations in the world. In Sweden for example, 18% of the population is over 65 compared with 13% in NZ. Mental illness is apparently the most important source of unhappiness. By world standards, we have a relatively high rate of suicide and that drags us down the ratings.

Other recent studies have looked at levels of happiness in different age groups. They fairly uniformly show that older people are happier on the whole than younger ones. This might seem counter-intuitive, but it is supported by other research that shows that older people are on the whole less angry and less anxious: they seem to have learned to deal with negative emotions better. They are more accepting of adverse influences, perhaps because they have come to terms with disease, the death of loved ones and so on over which they have no control. One can't help but wonder if the high proportion of older people in the Scandinavian countries is a key reason why their overall happiness indices are so high. If so, what a wonderful contribution older people are making to those – and indeed all – nations!

Three of our current PhD scholars are doing research into factors that influence the well-being of older people. One is investigating the role of volunteering by older people in their life satisfaction. Another has been evaluating the role of human to human contact in various forms in preventing depression. A third project just completed has been examining the role of environmental factors in influencing the freedom of older people to enjoy their lives. We hope to have reports on these timely projects for publication in the near future. We need as a country to have as a basis for happiness something more permanent and compelling than the score in the latest All Blacks game or the possibility that the America's Cup will return to NZ! I believe that our scholars are showing the way.

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PRESENTATIONS BY OUR SUMMER STUDENTS

On August 19th our Summer Students presented the results of their research at the Annual General meeting of the New Zealand Association of Gerontology. The presentations were at Massey University Albany Campus with simultaneous video conferencing members in Palmerston North, Wellington and Dunedin.



Robert Carr

Investigating relationships between environmental factors and health measures

Summary of the Research and its significance to the health of New Zealanders:

Both international and national research has shown that climate has a significant impact on health, particularly within the elderly population. Heat waves and prolonged periods of cold temperatures tend to form the base of international research. Hospitalisation rates increase as we age, and it is essential to determine which factors increase these rates. This studentship aims to identify links between household and environmental climate data, and the health status and hospitalisation rates of participants with the goal of providing remedial avenues for the health and social care system to investigate, whilst also identifying any high risk groups related particularly to locality, environment and housing. It is perceived that highlighting any inequalities in the health status of participants will be beneficial in developing methods to improve the ageing process – which is highly important to the overall health of the New Zealand Society.

Results

Several health measures were found to have significant relationships ($p<0.05$) with environment and demographic factors. Nottingham Extended Activities of Daily Living (NEADL) scores produced significant test results with the participant's perceived warmth of house and whether or not they classify as rural. All cause hospitalisations and the distribution of



Steven Xie, Dr Stephen Neville incoming President of the New Zealand Association of Gerontology, Robert Carr and Professor David Richmond President of the HOPE Foundation for Research on Ageing.

house temperature at point of survey produced significant test results with the participant's perceived warmth of house, and the number of medications taken daily produced significant test results dependent on whether they classified as rural or urban.

Conclusion

Statistical test results provide some insight into relationships between environment factors, demographic factors and health measures. A potential relationship between household temperature, humidity and health measures may be established with longitudinal data logging to establish a more robust measure of household climate.



Steven Xie

Epidemiology of Diverticular Disease in New Zealand

Summary of the Research and its significance to the health of New Zealanders:

Little is known of diverticular disease in New Zealand, its epidemiology or resource use. This report investigates the burden of diverticular disease in New Zealand. The information, e.g. time to recurrent admissions, may inform the self-management of this chronic disease.

Results

There were 113,056 public hospital admissions between 1992 and 2011 with any mention of diverticular disease, an average of 471 admissions per month. Mean age-specific acute

FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Professor David Richmond will continue in the Chair although he has stated that this will be his last year. Having begun the process of founding the HOPE Foundation in 1994, this will be his 20th year as its Chair. Dr Maree Todd continues as Vice Chair.

Members of The Board

Prof David Richmond (Chair)

Mr John Biggs

Assoc Prof Andrew Shelling

Prof Martin Connolly

Mrs Marie Hull-Brown

Mrs Robin Northey

Mr Richard Ray

Dr Maree Todd

Mrs Carolyn Ward was confirmed Chair of the Friends Committee and Mr Paul Cooney as Hon. Treasurer. Mr Rex Paddy continues as Hon. Secretary and Executive Officer

The Chair confirmed that Professor Louise Nicholson and Dr Rod Perkins had been thanked for their significant contributions to the Board. He commented that it had been a very good year with the highlights being the

admission rates increase with age, particularly after the age of 65 years, but at some ages admission rates differ by gender.

Diverticular disease was recorded as the main cause of 938 deaths.

The prevalence of diverticular disease in New Zealand, based only on past acute hospitalisation for diverticular disease and subsequent mortality, is estimated to be 24,090 people in November 2012.

Conclusion

Diverticular disease places substantial demand on public hospitalisations and is responsible for a small proportion of deaths. This project is a starting point for future research on the epidemiology of diverticular disease in New Zealand. Analysis of primary care diverticular disease should be considered in the future to understand more fully the epidemiology of diverticular disease in New Zealand.

undertaking by The Selwyn Foundation to fund our core activities and the appointment of Rex Paddy as Executive Officer. The result has been an increase in funding which will allow an increase in the number of Summer Students and of students receiving Scholarships providing the standard of applications remain high.

FROM THE BOARD MEETING

Symposium

It was agreed that planning should commence for a two day Symposium for Researchers on Ageing in late August 2014. Those invited to attend would be past, present and future researchers. The Symposium would be over two days with day one devoted to presentations by past and current researchers. Each would give a 15 minute presentation followed by 5 minutes discussion. On day two aspiring researchers would outline their research proposals and receive advice from experienced researchers on methodology, structure and possible help in identifying appropriate supervisors for their research.

Existing researchers and university staff are very supportive of this proposal. It is also believed that this Symposium could provide an opportunity for the emerging 'Consortium of Researchers on Ageing' to meet together for the first time.

Our Reason for Being

The meeting provided an opportunity for the Board to review its purpose and to identify its core reason for being. This resulted in a wide ranging discussion with the following phrase being accepted as encapsulating our primary purpose.

"We seek to improve the health and well-being of older people by providing research funding to younger people at the beginning of their careers in the expectation that they will retain a lifetime professional interest in this important subject."