**Eforum Newsletter: NRHA eforum 13 April 2006**

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum - 13 April 2006

In this issue:
* Disadvantaged people at higher risk for ill health
* National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, 2004-05
* AARN National Conference
* The National SARRAH Conference
* Infectious Diseases: Management and Control
* ACRRM Call for Abstracts for the ACRRM 4th Scientific Forum
* Mental Healthcare Must Reach the Bush Too
* New articles in "Rural and Remote Health"
* A 100 year review of health in Australia
* Australia's health 2006 conference
* Extract from Australian Doctor E-NEWS
* New accommodation boosts Lismore rural health studies
* Indigenous Unemployment Falling
* Rural Health on the Web
* Conference announcements
* Contribution and subscription information and disclaimer

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### DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE AT HIGHER RISK OF ILL HEALTH

Disadvantaged groups experience more severe and more long-term health problems than other Australians, according to a report released jointly by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

The report, Health Inequalities in Australia: morbidity, health behaviours, risk factors and health services use, looks at where people live, their income, education and occupation, and finds that being disadvantaged puts people at much higher risk for health problems.

The report found that people living in the most disadvantaged areas visited the GP more often than other Australians, but made significantly fewer visits to dentists or medical specialists.

'Disadvantaged women are much less likely than their better-off counterparts to undergo early diagnostic tests for breast or cervical cancer, for example,' said report co-author Dr Gavin Turrell, of QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation.

He added that disadvantaged people were more likely to engage in risky health behaviours in general, with exposure to the sun, obesity and smoking just some of the health risk factors examined in the report.

'Measures to address these significant health inequalities could include improved living and working conditions, community involvement in health initiatives and changing health damaging behaviours,' Dr Turrell said.


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### NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH SURVEY, 2004-05

(ABS Catalogue 4715.0, released 11 April 2006)

In 2004-05, just over three-quarters (78%) of the Indigenous population reported their health as either good, very good or excellent (similar to the 77% recorded in the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and up slightly on the 73% recorded in the 2001 NHS(I)) and 22% reported their health as fair or poor (consistent with 23% in the 2002 NATSISS).

Around two-thirds (65%) of Indigenous people reported at least one long term health condition. Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians were equally likely to report a long term health condition.

Consistent with results from the 2001 survey, eye/sight problems (30%), asthma (15%), back and disc disorders (13%), heart/circulatory diseases (12%) and ear/hearing problems (12%) were the most commonly reported long term health conditions among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2004-05. In addition, 6% of Indigenous people reported diabetes and 2% reported kidney disease.


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### AARN NATIONAL CONFERENCE

'Moving with the Times'
Contemporary issues in rural nursing practice
25 - 27 October 2006, Brisbane

Call for abstracts soon to be announced - see http://www.aarn.asn.au/ for details
THE NATIONAL SARRAH CONFERENCE
Building bridges ...... Crossing borders
A Conference for Rural and Remote Allied Health Professionals
13 – 16 September 2006
Albury Convention Centre
ALBURY, NSW

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN
PROGRAM AVAILABLE
Information available on the website – http://www.sarrah.org.au

The 2006 National SARRAH Conference
PO Box 74
DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600
Phone: 02 6285 4660
Fax: 02 6285 4670
Email: conference@ruralhealth.org.au or register@ruralhealth.org.au
Website: http://www.sarrah.org.au

From: Clair North
Subject: Infectious Diseases: Management and Control
“Infectious Diseases: Management and Control” - REPEAT national satellite television broadcast
Presented by the Rural Health Education Foundation
Wednesday 26th April 8:00pm EST (repeated Friday 28th April 12:30pm EST)
Infectious diseases can have a devastating effect on both the health and well being of the community. These diseases are diverse in nature and all pose a potential threat to public health. This program looks at the management and control of infectious diseases, including practical advice for health professionals living and working in rural hospitals and local practices.
Reference is be made to the Australian Government’s revised Infection Control Guidelines.
Panellists:
Chair: Dr Norman Swan - Presenter of the Health Report on ABC Radio National.
Professor Aileen Plant - Professor, Centre for International Health, Curtin University, Perth.
Dr Mike Whitby - Director, Infection Management Services (Southern Queensland), Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane.
Emeritus Professor Peter McDonald - Chair, Health Reform, South Australia and Chair of the Review of the Infection Control Guidelines, Adelaide.
Dr Sue Page - Director of Education, Northern Rivers University Department of Rural Health, Lismore NSW & Immediate Past President, Rural Doctors Association of Australia.
For details about the program visit http://www.rhef.com.au/programs/403/403.html

From: Michael Gleeson
Subject: ACRRM Call for Abstracts for the ACRRM 4th Scientific Forum
Medical practitioners, specialists, allied health professionals, academics and students are invited to submit abstracts for Australia’s leading medical conference in health care in rural and remote settings.
The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) will conduct its 4th Scientific Forum at the University of Adelaide on 16-19 November 2006 and will present research, forum discussions, plenary sessions and clinical workshops specifically on the practical implementation of Rural and Remote Medicine.
ACRRM Academic Director Assoc. Prof. Elizabeth Chalmers said the conference content would examine the latest thinking and modern clinical practices for caring for Australians in regional and rural Australia.
She said the theme “Practising Rural and Remote Medicine – Moving Forward” captured the positive future for the discipline.
Assoc. Prof. Chalmers also said that speakers from a variety of professional groups would be invited to this year’s conference, including indigenous health experts, nurses, medical specialists, and allied health practitioners, as each had an important role to play in the collaborative provision of medical care in the bush.
Individuals interested in preparing presentations, posters or workshops for the ACRRM 4th Scientific Forum can obtain more information by visiting the ACRRM web site at http://www.acrrm.org.au or by contacting ACRRM on 1800 223 226.
The deadline for abstracts is 12 May 2006.
Manuscript submissions to The Australian Journal of Rural Health can now be made online through Manuscript Central. Easy and fast submission process; track the progress of your article at any time; safe and secure site. Simply log on to http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ajrh to submit your manuscript today and share the wealth of your knowledge. Full author instructions and guidelines can be found at the AJRH homepage - http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/ajrh

The April 2006 issue of the journal is available online now at http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/links/toc/ajr. Articles include:

* National health policy: What does this mean for rural mental health research?
* Factors influencing rural health care professionals' access to continuing professional education
* Caregivers' inability to identify childhood adiposity: A cross-sectional survey of rural children and their caregivers' attitudes
* Exploration of self-identified education needs of alcohol and other drug workers
* Tobacco smoking habits among a cross-section of rural physicians in China
* Utilisation and clinical efficacy of echocardiography in a regional hospital
* Mental health referral role of rural financial counsellors
* Alcohol problems and psychological health in a remote Indigenous Australian community: A preliminary quantitative study
* Australian medical students' intentions in relation to practice location: Their short- and long-term time frame
* Strength in difference
* AARN and CRANA: Peak rural and remote nursing bodies welcome Medicare item for maternity care.
* ACRRM supports next crop of rural proceduralists.

Mental Healthcare Must Reach the Bush Too

An expansion of Medicare to cover mental healthcare services provided by psychologists on referral from GPs and psychiatrists has been welcomed by the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA).

But the Association has warned that the extreme shortage of psychologists and mental health nurses in the bush will make it difficult for many rural and remote patients to receive these services, and that significant effort must be made to get more of these healthcare professionals into rural practice.

In Australia's major capitals, there are nearly 6 allied health professionals delivering psychology services per 10,000 people. The numbers drop to less than 1 of these professionals per 10,000 people in very remote areas, less than 2 in remote areas, less than 2.5 in outer regional areas, and less than 3.5 in inner regional areas.


NEW ARTICLES IN "RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH"

'Postgraduate medical placements in rural areas: their impact on the rural medical workforce'
Most now agree with the concept of the rural medical pipeline for creating a sustainable workforce. Are parts of the pipe still constricted or leaking? This article looks at the impact of cadetships in Australia on career choice- could they be one of the ways of keeping the pipe open?

A 100 YEAR REVIEW OF HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA

Life expectancy in Australia increased by 24 years for newborn males and 25 years for newborn females in the course of a century, according to a new report released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

The report, Mortality over the twentieth century, charts for the first time, trends in mortality in Australia over the last century. It highlights major diseases and conditions that contributed to mortality in Australia, and describes the public health successes that have helped substantially lower the death rate, which has fallen by over two-thirds since 1900.

Mr Krys Sadkowsky of the AIHW's National Health Priorities and Environmental Health Unit said, 'A significant success story to emerge from over the century trend analysis is a huge reduction in infant mortality rate.'

There have been some notable successes including:
* A two-thirds reduction in overall death rates
* A 96% decrease in deaths from infectious diseases
* A 95% decrease in death rate for children aged 0-4 years (including infants)
* An 85% reduction in stomach cancer mortality
* An 80% reduction in cervical and uterine cancer mortality
* An 80% reduction in respiratory disease mortality
* Over two third reduction in circulatory diseases deaths after the 1970s
* A 30% reduction in male lung cancer deaths
* A 70% reduction in motor vehicle accident deaths since peak in 1970s.

Areas of concern:
* A seven fold increase in lung cancer deaths for females
* Increased death rates for septicaemia (blood poisoning) among older Australians
* Increasing death rates for mental health and nervous system diseases
A recent increase in infectious disease mortality
* Relatively constant death rate from cancer after adjusting for lung cancer among males.


Join friends of the Alliance in 2006. By joining friends you will receive the updated CD 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2005', a 2006 friends certificate, regular issues of PARTYline newsletter, and be eligible for a discounted registration at the 9th National Rural Health Conference to be held in Albury in March 2007. Membership of friends would also give you the opportunity to be involved more closely with the Alliance's information dissemination and policy work. You will become part of a group of people who contribute to and support the work of the National Rural Health Alliance.

PARTYline is the official newsletter of the National Rural Health Alliance. Keep up to date with rural health policy information and good news stories on living and working in the rural health community. The December edition (No. 24) of PARTYline is available online at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhapublic/Index.cfm?Category=PartyLine or receive a hard copy by emailing partyline@ruralhealth.org.au

AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH 2006 CONFERENCE
21 June 2006, Hyatt Hotel Canberra, Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla

This one day conference, held in Canberra, provides insights into key issues facing Australia’s health services and resources, chronic diseases, and highlights trends and concerns in population health. The conference will assess current health statistics and demonstrate the relevance of these figures to future health practices and reforms.

The one-day program commences with the launch of Australia’s health 2006 by the Hon. Tony Abbott MP, Minister for Health and Ageing. This publication is the nation’s most comprehensive and authoritative source of health statistics and related information. All delegates receive a complimentary copy of this important statistical resource.

The conference program, available at http://www.aihw.gov.au/eventsdiary/ah06/program.cfm includes keynote addresses by eminent speakers, with sessions being held in a broad spectrum of health arenas including:
* Socioeconomic inequalities
* Workforce planning
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
* Changing face of primary healthcare
* Chronic diseases
* Health as an economic growth sector
* Rural health

LIFELINE'S JUST ASK - 1 300 13 11 14

Your Rural Mental Health Information Service
Lifeline's Just ask is a rural mental health information service. Information provided includes: referral to services and web sites, printed material and a range of self help resources. The self-help resources focus on practical steps to help promote mental health in a range of areas. For information and copies of resources call or visit http://www.justask.org.au and further information is available at national@lifeline.org.au and http://www.lifeline.org.au

NEW ACCOMMODATION BOOSTS LISMORE RURAL HEALTH STUDIES

More students of medicine, nursing and allied health disciplines will be able to study and experience rural health practice in Lismore, following the opening of expanded and improved student accommodation. The Commonwealth Government has provided $576,290 to renovate and refurbish two houses for use by students of the Northern Rivers University Department of Rural Health (UDRH). Eleven university departments of rural health have been established in rural Australia and two more will open shortly as part of the Government's $830 million Rural Health Strategy. The full text of Health Minister, Tony Abbott's statement is at http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/content/health-mediarel-yr2006-ta-abb041.htm

BUSH CRISIS LINE - 1800 805 391

Bush Crisis Line is a twenty-four hour confidential telephone support and debriefing service for multi-disciplinary remote and rural health practitioners and their families. It is staffed by qualified psychologists with remote and cross-cultural experience, is toll free and available from anywhere in Australia. For more information http://www.bushcrisisline.org.au
INDIGENOUS UNEMPLOYMENT FALLING

The national unemployment for Indigenous persons aged 15 years and over has fallen to 15.4 per cent for 2004-05. This result represents a fall of 7.5 percentage points, compared to the 2002 survey when Indigenous unemployment was measured at 22.9 per cent. Over the same period, employment for Indigenous Australians grew by 10.3 per cent.

This is according to the 2004-05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS). Employment data was collected between August 2004 to July 2005. The previous National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) was conducted in between August 2002 and April 2003.

The full statement by the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Kevin Andrews, is at http://mediacentre.dewr.gov.au/mediacentre/ministerandrews/releases/indigenousunemploymentfalling.htm

RURAL HEALTH ON THE WEB
(From GoogleAlert, http://www.googlealert.com/)

SD Office of Rural Health
Use this page to find out about recruitment of health professionals, assistance to facilities such as hospitals and rural health clinics, helping interested ... http://www.ruralhealth.sd.gov/

From: Mary Lenihan
Subject: Rural Health Conference-'Going for Gold', Ballarat 19-21 April 2006

The second rural and regional health conference 'Rural Health - Going for Gold' will be held in Ballarat 19-21 April. The Rural and Regional Health Services Branch (DHS) is currently inviting keynote speakers (Victorian, national and international) to present at the conference.

The workshops at the conference will address three key directions for rural health in Victoria:
* Promote the health and wellbeing of rural Victorians
* Foster a contemporary health system and models of care for rural Victoria
* Strengthen and sustain rural health services.


NATIONAL HEALTH PROMOTION CONFERENCE 2006

The Australian Health Promotion Association are organising a national health promotion conference in Alice Springs 23 - 26 April 2006. Further information about this interesting event is available on http://www.healthpromotion.org.au or www.nt.gov.au/he and choose 'Health Promotion' from the list of topics and services. Alternatively you could email ahpa@confco.com.au

From: Ann Larson
Subject: The Rural e-Health Forum, 18-19 May 2006, Geraldton WA

Will innovations in e-Health live up to their extraordinary promise? It has been touted as a mechanism to dissolve physical distance, bring the knowledge of the specialist into rural surgeries, remote health clinics and multipurpose services, and enable secure exchange of vital medical information. Robots in district hospitals, data vaults of important health information for transient populations, remote specialist consults through email and videoconferencing are all a reality. In many cases good care is reaching people who in the past had to do without.

But it is time to take stock. What works in rural and remote settings? What are the barriers to greater adoption? What technological advances are around the corner and what should we be doing now? What should be our priorities?

On 18 and 19 May there will be a Rural e-Health Forum in Geraldton. This is your chance to talk with clinicians who are using new technologies, with the inventors designing the next big thing, with the industry and with policy makers. The Forum is jointly organised by CUCRH, the Midwest Division of General Practice and the Centre of Excellence in e-Medicine.

See the forum website http://www.cucrh.uwa.edu.au/eHealth

From: Kremser, Thea
Subject: Breast cancer training workshop for Indigenous health workers

The National Breast Cancer Centre will be holding a training workshop for Indigenous Health Workers in Cairns on Friday 26 May 2006. The National Breast Cancer Centre undertakes numerous initiatives to improve care in breast and ovarian cancer, and we aim to encourage best practice, improve health worker skills and encourage equity of access to optimal care and information for Australian women with breast cancer.

The training workshop has been developed in consultation with Indigenous health workers from across Australia who work with other Indigenous health workers and with Indigenous women with breast cancer. The workshop aims to assist Indigenous health workers in improving their knowledge of breast cancer and how it affects women in their communities.
If there is any additional information I can give you, please do not hesitate to contact me directly on 02 9036 3068.

Thea Kremser
Project Officer
National Breast Cancer Centre
92 Parramatta Road Camperdown NSW 2050
Direct Telephone +61 2 9036 3068
Facsimile +61 2 9036 3077 www.nbcc.org.au

From: Partridge, Michael
Subject: 2006 Health Outcomes Conference

HEALTH OUTCOMES 2006: MANAGING HEALTH AND DISEASE IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

12th Annual Health outcomes Conference
9 - 10 August 2006
Rydges Lakeside, Canberra, ACT
Call for Papers closes 10 March 2006
michael.partridge@act.gov.au

7th WONCA RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE
Transforming Rural Practice Through Education
8-15 September 2006
Seattle, WA, USA
http://www.ruralwonca2006.com

Wonca is the World Organisation of Family Doctors, which has a specific Working Party on Rural Practice. This Working Party holds an annual conference on rural health and has produced a number of policy documents regarding rural health (for more information about Wonca, go to http://www.globalfamilydoctor.com).

WONCA Rural Conference
8-10 September 2006
University of Washington campus
Clinical Conference
11-13 September 2006
34th Annual Advances in Family Practice and Primary Care
University of Washington campus
Post Conference
13-15 September 2006
Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge - Anchorage, Alaska

From: Michelle Magro
Subject: WHA & CHA CONFERENCE

The joint conference of Women's Hospitals Australasia and Children's Hospitals Australasia will be held at The Country Club Resort, in the delightful city of Launceston, Tasmania, 13-17 November this year.

This year’s conference theme is TEAM and will explore how effective teams can significantly improve quality of care and service delivery. Given the increasing trend toward health service redesign, and a move away from hierarchical structures, the health care 'team' is probably the most important consideration in advancing healthcare over the next decade. As technology advances, skill mix needs change, workforce shortages increase the need for flexibility within the health workforce, and as consumer expectations increase they become a fundamental member of the healthcare team.

Monday 13 November: Clinical Forum ‘CUBS’ - (Care of Unwell Babies)
Tuesday 14 November: WHA Conference
Wednesday 15 November: Joint WHA & CHA Conference
Thursday 16 November: CHA Conference
Friday 17 November: Clinical Forum - Better Integration of Paediatric Acute & Community Care

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON "DIVERSITY IN AGEING" ANNOUNCED FOR SYDNEY

The Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) has announced it will hold its 2006 National Conference in Sydney during November. To be held 22 – 24 November 2006 at the Wesley Centre the Conference will focus on the theme ‘Diversity in Ageing.’

The conference is the major annual activity of the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG), which brings together professionals interested in promoting education and research into all aspects of ageing. The Association encourages cross disciplinary exchange of ideas amongst professionals including clinicians, therapists, social scientists, economists and demographers. The anticipated 350 delegates are expected to include medical practitioners, researchers, nurses, social workers, psychologists, social scientists, music therapists, economists, demographers, geographers and consumers interested in the field of ageing research, education, service provision and policy.
Further information on the Conference is available on http://www.aag.asn.au/conference2006.htm or by contacting the Conference Managers on 1300 368 783 or email aag@eastcoastconferences.com.au

CONTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND DISCLAIMER

The NRHA e-forum is edited by a third party moderator, Jim Groves. Contributions are sought on any topic relevant to rural health concerns. Please send contributions to the moderator at grovesc@winshop.com.au (do not “reply” to this email - send contributions to grovesc@winshop.com.au).

As such, the Alliance does not control postings and the contents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Alliance. Nor do postings necessarily reflect the view of Jim Groves or any organisation he is associated with. Jim Groves can be contacted at grovesc@winshop.com.au.

This issue is going to 2,504 email addresses. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.