



# PATH Through Life

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

## Wave 5 data collection continues!

Welcome to the annual newsletter for the PATH Through Life study. 2017 has seen the completion of both Wave 5 for the 20+ cohort and the Follow-up phone calls for the 60+s. Work is well underway on the development of Wave 5 for the 40+ cohort which will start in mid 2018.

PATH continues to inform key areas of health and social policy. Data has been investigated by academics and PhD students in Australia and abroad. To date, PATH has been used in more than 250 journal articles and more than 20 PhD theses, as well as many Policy reports for both the Commonwealth and the ACT Governments.

I am delighted to let you all know that in January 2018 I will be taking on a new role at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) as a Professor of Psychology and have an appointment at Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA) as a Senior Principal Research Scientist. I will continue at ANU as an Honorary Professor and maintain my role with PATH and engagement with the Canberra community. The PATH Executive Committee will continue

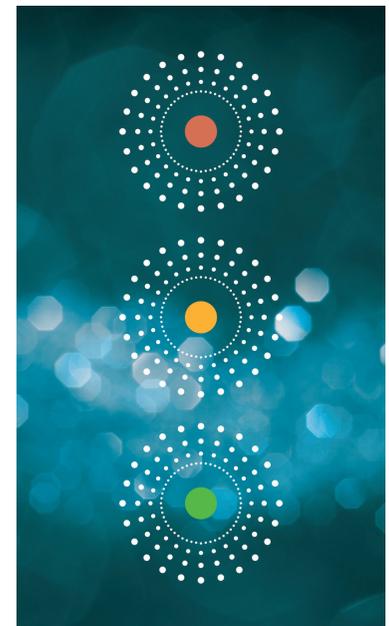
to include myself; Professor Peter Butterworth, who is at the University of Melbourne and also holds an Honorary Professorship at ANU; and Associate Professor Nicolas Cherbuin from ANU.

We are working hard to ensure a smooth transition and, while there will be some administrative changes, the goals of the project will remain the same.

In other staffing news, we recently said farewell to our Data Manager, Imogen Gad, who has begun maternity leave. We thank her for her hard work and wish her, and her family, all the very best.

With best wishes for the festive season and 2018,

Professor Kaarin Anstey



### About PATH

**A longitudinal lifespan study** of adults originally sampled in the A.C.T. and Queanbeyan, N.S.W.

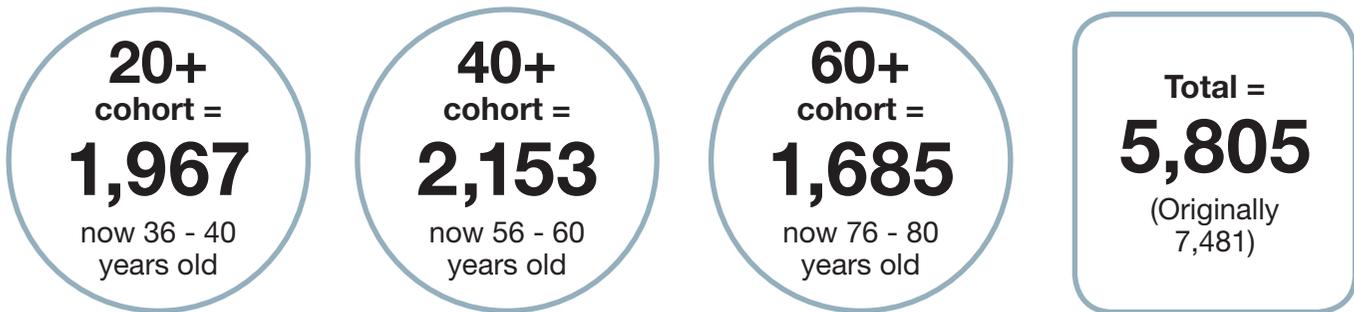
**Run by** the ANU with the University of Melbourne and UNSW

**Funding from** the Australian Research Council and National Health and Medical Research Council

**Examines** cognitive development and mental health from early to late adulthood

**A key goal is** to identify environmental risk and protective factors for depression, anxiety, substance use and cognitive ability

## How many people are currently in PATH?



### PATH 20+ cohort

The final interview for Wave 5 took place in October 2017. Over 1,400 online surveys were completed with 1,265 face to face interviews.

We have turned our attention to finalising this valuable data set and look forward to relaying the findings in the years ahead.

The team gives a huge THANK YOU to all our participants! We couldn't do this without you.

### PATH 40+ cohort

We're delighted to inform you that Wave 5 for 40+ cohort is being developed. We look to start interviewing in May 2018 with an online survey as well as a face to face interview.

Our goal is to capture information about your lifestyle, recent life events, thinking skills, as well as your physical and mental health. This will enable us to examine how these factors interact and have an influence over a lifetime.

Under the leadership of Professor Kaarin Anstey, ORIMA Research will provide IT assistance for this wave.

It is important that we have your email address so we can send you the online survey. Please let us know if your email, or other contact details have changed by completing the enclosed card.

If you have any questions, please contact the PATH40+ Survey Manager for Wave 5, Sarah Kamppi. Phone: 1300 917 295 or email: [path@anu.edu.au](mailto:path@anu.edu.au)

### PATH 60+ cohort

The follow up phone calls for the 60+ cohort are wrapping up. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank our participants and interviewers for their dedication to this new wave of PATH 60+.

We've had strong response rates and have valued this opportunity to learn about some key aspects of your health and wellbeing. We'd also like to extend our thanks to your relative or friend who may have been contacted to provide other valuable information.

#### How PATH is informing Government...

PATH data will be used to provide information for the 2018 ACT Chief Health Officer's (CHO) Report.

The CHO report is published every two years to provide information about the health of the ACT population. It informs the ACT Minister for Health on priority health issues for the ACT.

#### How PATH has helped validate a dementia risk self-assessment tool...

The ANU Alzheimer's Disease Risk Assessment tool (ANU-ADRI) is freely available at [anuadri.anu.edu.au](http://anuadri.anu.edu.au), and estimates one's risk of future dementia based on exposures to known risk factors. Data from the PATH 60s cohort showed that those with lower risk scores on the ANU-ADRI had larger volumes in some brain regions and a lower risk of developing mild cognitive impairment over the following 12 years.

## Recent analysis of PATH data

### Healthy blood sugar levels are the key to a healthy ageing brain



Blood glucose levels can have a negative impact on your brain, whether you have diabetes or not. The ANU's Dr. Erin Walsh used PATH data to explore the effects of blood glucose levels on the health of the brain. Investigations found that high levels of blood sugar can affect the volume of the brain and may be associated with an increased risk of cognitive impairment or Alzheimer's disease.

The key is to maintain healthy levels of blood sugar in order to promote healthy brain ageing. Adopting healthy lifestyle habits, such as regular exercise, and having a healthy diet that limits sugar can be key for a healthy ageing brain. "The work would not be possible without being able to explore blood sugar in members of the general public over several follow up assessments" said Dr Walsh.

#### For details of recently released papers, see:

<http://rsph.anu.edu.au/research/projects/personality-total-health-path-through-life>

#### What research is underway with PATH data?

**Dr Kim Kiely from the ANU** is researching financial hardship and cognitive decline

**Dr Liana Leach from the ANU** is looking at depression and anxiety in early adulthood and the consequences for partner relationship support and conflict

**Dr Ranmalee Eramudugolla from the ANU** is researching social cognition in mild cognitive impairment and normal ageing

**Dr Carly Pymont from the ANU** is looking at the linked Medicare data as well as the factors which influence workplace engagement and workplace stressors

**Dr Sophie Andrews from Monash University** is researching predictors of physical activity at midlife and associated brain and cognitive outcomes

**Prof Mark Whisman from the University of Colorado, USA**, is researching longitudinal associations between rumination and depressive symptoms

**Prof Rong Peng, Guangdong University of Finance and Economics, China**, is researching health changes and care service supply of informal caregivers aged 60+ in Australia

#### PATH PhD Research

PATH provides a unique opportunity to examine changes in women as they transition from the reproductive to post-reproductive stage of life. Stephanie Mulhall, PhD (Clinical Psychology) candidate, has focused on this impact in her PhD research.

Recently published findings were that women are at greater risk of higher symptoms of depression during perimenopause and higher symptoms of anxiety during postmenopause compared to those who are premenopausal. More work is under way.

**Did you know ...**  
physical activity and exercise might help reduce the risk of dementia?

## PATH Team

**Professor Kaarin Anstey,**  
PATH Executive

**Professor Peter Butterworth,**  
PATH Executive

**Associate Professor Nicolas Cherbuin,**  
PATH Executive

**Dr Liana Leach,**  
20+ Co-Investigator

**Dr Richard Burns,**  
20+ Co-Investigator

**Dr Carly Pymont,**  
20+ Survey Manager

**Ms Sarah Kamppi,**  
40+ and 60+ Survey Manager

**Ms Imogen Gad,**  
PATH Data Manager  
(on leave)

**Please note that our new PATH phone number is 1300 917 295**

Direct all your future calls to this number as the previous one is no longer in use.

## Your PATH Interviewers



Pictured: PATH60+ 2017 Interviewers (from left): Alexandra, Liz, Cathy, Rose, Cherie

Over the years, you may have come to know one or more of our dedicated PATH interviewers. Betty, Cathy, Rose, Kay and Shaaron have been dedicated to PATH for many years, while we've welcomed new interviewers such as Sarah, Cheryl, Terry, Andrew, Melanie and Ian in 2017. Or perhaps you have been interviewed by Cherie, Rik, Nathalie, Margaret or Jean. Many participants are familiar with Elizabeth (Liz) Parkes who has played an important role in PATH since its inception 20 years ago. She's been involved with interviewing all three cohorts as well as providing staff training and advice.

## Message to participants from Liz

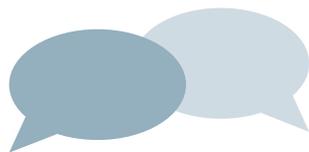
I feel I have been on an amazing life journey with many of you as I have seen you embark on studies, careers and travel while others have tackled health issues, moved into retirement or experienced major changes to your family. It has been great that you have continued in PATH through these times. While for some there may not be a lot of personal gain in participating, we really do value your time and effort as it helps us paint a rich and detailed picture of life in Australia.

I am often amazed by how willing you are to give of yourself. I look forward to continuing my journey with you and seeing what changes and challenges have taken place. From my point of view, many of you feel more like friends than participants and I enjoy our encounters no matter how brief.

A very big thank you to you all and I wish you the best for 2018.

Liz

Don't forget to return your card with any updated contact details!



### We'd love to stay in touch

Have you moved house?

Have you changed your phone number or email?

Do you have constructive feedback for us?

#### Contact us at:

E [path@anu.edu.au](mailto:path@anu.edu.au)

T 1300 917 295