



PATH Through Life

2016 Newsletter

A message from the Director

Wave 5 is underway!

Welcome to the annual newsletter for PATH Through Life. As many readers will know, our project examines cognitive development and mental health from early to late adulthood, and is one of the only longitudinal lifespan studies in Australia. Data that is collected is already informing key areas of health and social policy.

The fifth wave is a critical wave for PATH as it represents the point at which each cohort enters the baseline age of the next cohort, allowing comparisons of health and wellbeing between cohorts at the same age.

For example, the BMI graph on page 3 of this issue indicates that BMI of the male 20+ cohort rose steadily up to wave 4. It will be interesting to see whether this cohort continues the upward trend in BMI. For researchers it is important information that we need to interpret to determine how to tackle BMI, health and wellbeing.

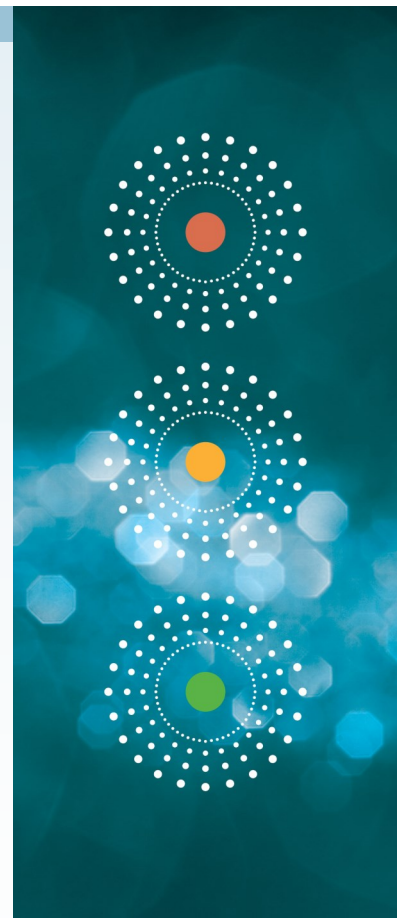
We very much appreciate your valuable participation in PATH. So much so, that we are putting out a call to volunteers to tell their story so that we can use this material to publicise the project, its aims, and some of its achievements. See the PATH Exhibition notice on this page for more information.

I'd like to welcome two new people to the PATH team. Earlier this year Dr Carly Pymont joined us as Survey Manager for the PATH 20+ Wave 5 project led by Professor Peter Butterworth. Carly received her PhD at the Research School of Psychology at ANU and she has worked on many projects with CRAHW.

Imogen Gad also joined us earlier this year in the role of Data Manager for PATH. Imogen has a Masters in Medical Science (Clinical Epidemiology) and extensive experience working on large population health projects similar to PATH. Imogen is your contact for participation related queries.

With best wishes for the Festive Season and 2017,

Professor Kaarin Anstey



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PATH Exhibition

We are asking PATH participants to volunteer to be photographed and interviewed about their PATH, and life, experiences for an exhibition that may travel to conferences in Australia and overseas.

This is a voluntary project to help raise awareness of PATH and the importance of ageing research.

Contact **Imogen Gad** for more details.

Fridge Door

2017—Mid February

20+ cohort

Online survey and face-to-face interviews focusing on:

- ◆ Mental health trajectories from young adulthood into middle-age
- ◆ Substance use
- ◆ Wellbeing and work
- ◆ Relationships and family

Coming in 2017—2018

40+ cohort

Online survey and face-to-face interviews.

60+ cohort

Phone follow-ups.

PATH project conference

CEPAR Renewal

The Centre for Excellence on Population Ageing Research (CEPAR) received a boost with the news that the Australian Research Council has renewed funding for seven years.

The Centre is led by the University of New South Wales (UNSW), and the ANU partnership is led by Professor Kaarin Anstey, Director of CRAHW.

The CEPAR research program includes funding for data collection for Wave 5 of the 40+ and 60+ Cohort of PATH.

We continue to seek research funding for the MRI, blood collection, assessment, data linkage and communications costs for these cohorts.

PATH 20+ cohort

To prepare for the fifth wave of data collection with the **20+ cohort** we have been busily contacting people and updating details.

If you haven't heard from us yet, or if you have any questions, please contact our Survey Manager, Dr Carly Pymont. She will answer all your queries:

Phone: + 61 2 6125 9749

Email: carly.pymont@anu.edu.au

Based upon your comments and feedback we have engaged leading Australian research company, Roy

Morgan Research, to conduct the next round of fieldwork with testing scheduled to begin in mid-February 2017.

Professor Peter Butterworth, is a chief researcher on the NHMRC project grant that is funding the 20+ cohort data collection.

He is leading the fifth wave which focusses on patterns of anxiety and depression from early to mid-adulthood, and identifying the personal, social and economic consequences of anxiety and depression.

“Our mission is to conduct high quality, innovative research to identify strategies to optimize wellness over the lifespan and promote healthy ageing for individuals and societies.”

Professor Kaarin Anstey, Director, CRAHW.

PATH 40+ cohort

The fifth wave of interviews for the **40+ cohort** are expected to start in late 2017 and continue into the first half of 2018.

Is 60 the new 40? The information provided at Wave 5 will allow comparisons of health and wellbeing between cohorts at the same age!

In the 40s wave 5 follow-up we will continue our interest in mental health, wellbeing, work and social health. We will ask new questions about ageing and future planning.

PATH 60+ cohort

We expect the **60+ cohort** assessments to commence in 2018, although we are seeking funding to conduct phone follow-up interviews in 2017.

We are particularly interested in cognitive impairment and dementia and have already discovered some risk and protective factors in our cohort. In this next follow-up we will ask about what care you give and receive, and about financial decision-making. We also want to know about your wellbeing and health, driving, and daily activities.

Recent results from PATH data collection

A high Body Mass Index (BMI) is linked to a number of adverse health outcomes and so is important to monitor at a population level to make sure health policies are targeted effectively. BMI increased for both men and women in the 20s and 40s cohorts over the 4 Waves. The most dramatic increase was in the 20s cohort whose BMIs increased from a healthy weight range (<25) to overweight range from Wave 1 to Wave 2. Although in the overweight category both men and women in the 60s cohort maintained a stable BMI.

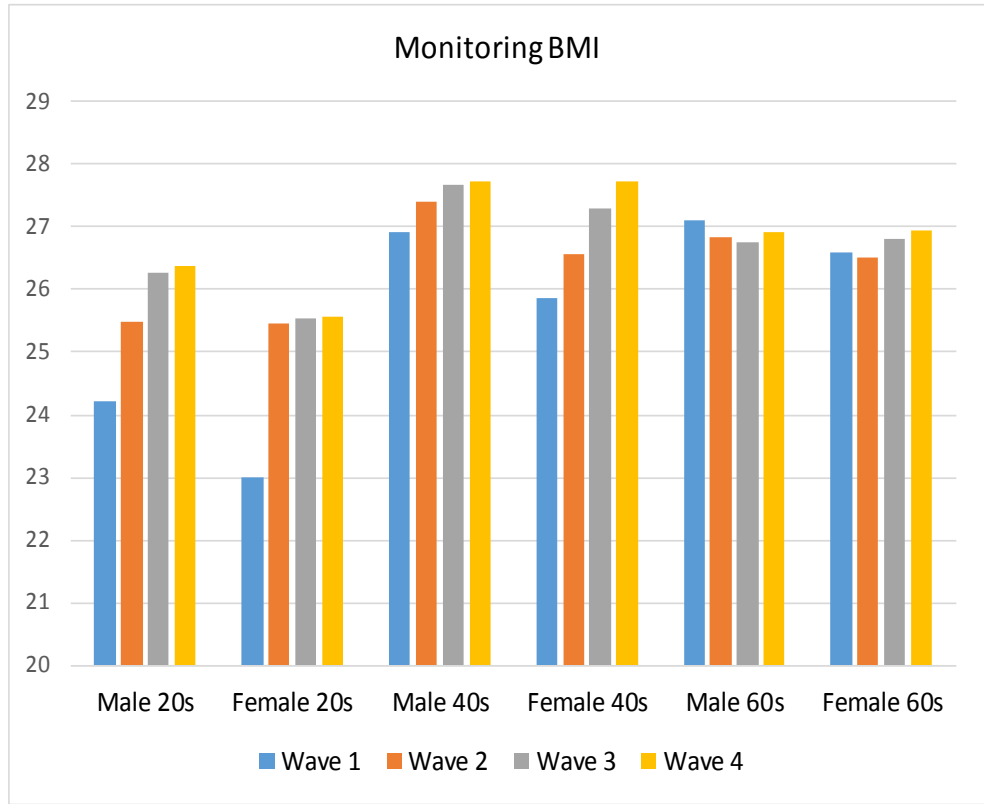


Figure showing the average BMI for males and females in each age-group at each Wave

Diabetes is a complex condition affecting the levels of sugar in the blood and can impact quality of life and life expectancy. Rates in the 60s cohort for both men and women respectively (18%,13%) were higher than the 20s and 40s cohorts. PATH data provides a valuable resource in monitoring trends in diabetes prevalence.

Clinical depression scores and **smoking rates** were lower than the national averages and also lower in the 60s cohort than the 20s and 40s.

Short term memory as tested by the 'shopping list' recall test was higher in the 20s and 40s cohorts and also slightly higher in women than men .

	20+ Cohort (32-36yrs)		40+ Cohort (52-56yrs)		60+ Cohort (72-76yrs)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Diabetes	1%	2%	7%	4%	18%	13%
Current Smoker	12%	12%	9%	10%	3%	5%
Depression*	4%	5%	4%	5%	2%	2%
Short Term Memory†	8.4	9.0	7.6	8.8	5.0	5.6

* Reflects % of people that are categorised as 'clinically depressed' based on answers to the PHQ-9 questionnaire.

†Average number of words recalled from a 16-item 'shopping list' learning test.

PATH Team at CRAHW

Professor Kaarin Anstey

Professor Peter Butterworth

Associate Professor Nic Cherbuin

Dr Liana Leach

Dr Richard Burns

Dr Carly Pymont
(Survey Manager)

P: 02 61259749

E: carly.pymont@anu.edu.au

Ms Imogen Gad
(Data Manager)

P: 02 61258408

E: imogen.gad@anu.edu.au

Using PATH to inform local health policy

We are very pleased to announce significant progression in a research partnership with the ACT Health Directorate's Epidemiology Branch.

PhD student, Lily O'Donoghue-Jenkins and Dr Kimberly Ashby-Mitchell (who recently received her PhD from ANU) worked closely with the Branch to build relationships and cement this new partnership.

As a result, an ARC funded Linkage project and two ACT Health Directorate consultancies have enabled PATH researchers to translate their findings on health service use and chronic disease prevalence to help ACT Health policy-makers to better understand the health profile of Canberrans.

In another outcome, PATH data contributed to the ACT Chief Health Officer's Report.

Visiting Fellows

We have had a number of Visiting Fellows working on PATH data, including:

- ◆ Professor Eileen Lueders who is an Assistant Professor at the department of Neurology at the University of California. Her work focuses on sex differences in the brain using MRI scanning methods. She has also conducted research on the effects of meditation on the brain, and on brain ageing.
- ◆ Professor Andrea Meier and a group from the University of Melbourne and the Royal Melbourne Hospital are researching the relationship between dietary intake, physical activity, and depressive symptoms.
- ◆ Dr Perri Timmins and Dr Su Mon Kyaw-Myint from Safe Work Australia are researching health effects of shift work, work design, work safety, productivity and predictors of early retirement.
- ◆ Malinee Neelamegum is a PhD student in Florida USA (originally from Malaysia) who has recently arrived at CRAHW under an Endeavour Fellowship. She will be working on medications data in PATH.

Centre for Research on Ageing, Health & Wellbeing

PATH Through Life Project
Florey Building
54 Mills Road
ANU ACT 2601

Phone: 02 6125 8408

Email: path@anu.edu.au

Web: <http://>

crahw.anu.edu.au/research/projects/personality-total-health-path-through-life



Seasons Greetings from the PATH Team at CRAHW, (left to right) Dr Liana Leach, Prof Peter Butterworth, Prof Kaarin Anstey, A/Prof Nicolas Cherbuin, Dr Carly Pymont, Dr Richard Burns and Ms Imogen Gad