

AAAGP Travelling Fellowship 2008

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Background:

I am relatively new to the world of General Practice research, starting in 2007 as an Academic GP registrar with Professor Nicholas Zwar and Dr Sanjyot Vaghokar at the Fairfield Hospital General Practice Unit in Sydney.

During those 6 months I worked on a research project looking at Palliative care in General practice in collaboration with several researchers including Associate Professor Geoff Mitchell. I have discovered that he is a pioneer in the area of research that I am interested in – general practice palliative care. Since then Professor Mitchell has guided me with continuing advice and mentorship.

So it was with great excitement that I applied for the AAAGP Travelling Fellowship that offered me the opportunity for me to visit A/Professor Mitchell and the Discipline of General Practice at University of Queensland.

Aims:

The main aims for my trip to the University of Queensland were:

- To meet and network with Primary care researchers –researchers who are working in the field of Primary care palliative care and also researchers with other research interests in the Discipline of General Practice.
- Develop opportunities for collaborative research. There are not many researchers in Sydney who have an active research interest in Primary care palliative care so this was a great opportunity for me to speak to different researchers in Brisbane to seek opportunities for future collaboration.
- Experience another Department of General Practice. University of NSW (UNSW) is well and truly my home. I completed my undergraduate medical degree here; completed my hospital training in a teaching hospital that is affiliated with UNSW; completed my General Practice training through IGPE (Institute of General Practice Education and Training: RTP that is affiliated with UNSW); trained as an Academic GP registrar at UNSW; working in UNSW as well as doing a PhD here. So I might have a slightly coloured view of what academic Department of General Practice is like so this was a good opportunity for me to find out how things were done elsewhere!

Final thoughts

It turned out to be a great two weeks in which to make new networks and to discuss research with an enthusiastic group of academics and researchers in Brisbane. It was encouraging to see that high quality primary care palliative care research was being conducted here in Australia and gave me renewed enthusiasm and excitement for my own research in this areas. It has also given us new options and directions for future collaboration in research.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank AAAGP for this opportunity and for their financial support. I would like to thank A/Professor Geoff Mitchell, Professor Claire Jackson, Anne Bucetti and other academics, researchers and staff at the Discipline of General Practice at UQ for this great opportunity. Also I would like to thank Professor Nicholas Zwar and the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at UNSW and Dr George Kostalas at IGPE for giving me opportunity to travel to Brisbane for these two weeks.

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Activities:

- A presentation at the Discipline of General Practice of some of the research that I have been involved in at UNSW in Primary care palliative care and in Advance Care Planning.
- Meetings and discussions with researchers at UQ involved with various Primary care palliative care research projects: the GP toolkits project, single patient trials and the discharge planning project.
- Meetings and discussions with other academics and researchers at UQ about non-palliative care research including Professor Jackson's work, Dr Louise-Dick's e-cohort study and Dr Spurling's work with indigenous patients.
- Visits to the Ipswich Hospice. Professor Mitchell was instrumental in setting this up a few years ago, which is a community-run hospice with GPs caring for patients who are terminally ill. An excellent model of the high quality of care that GPs can provide patients in palliative care, and how well specialists can support this care. I could sense the great appreciation that volunteers, the patients and their relatives had for the quality care that they were receiving there.
- Discussions about the University of Queensland's medical program and UNSW's medical program – teaching and assessment especially about the General Practice component of the programs.
- Visit to the Center for Palliative Care Research and Education (CPCRE) and the Queensland PEPA program. Discussion about the educational and research incentives that is headed up by CPCRE. PEPA program is a program that aims to give practical palliative care experience to primary care professionals.
- Discussion of possibilities for future collaboration in research projects around primary care palliative care. In particular potential for collaboration around after-hours delivery of palliative care was discussed.

The lighter side and networking:

- Joining in with the Discipline of General Practice crowd at their annual Christmas luncheon and secret Santa when gifts such as an old statistics book were handed out!
- Geoff and Anne Bucetti (and Bruno) were kind enough to take me out to meals, lunches, dinners and sight-seeing around Brisbane! Highlights included the ferry cruise around Brisbane river and visiting a big hill overlooking the city (cannot remember its name).