Research News

Building capacity | Supporting innovation and development | Promoting success
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Message from the A/Executive Director

NHMRC’s Chief Executive Officer has approved the recommendations in the new digital version of the Australian Immunisation Handbook under section 14A of the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992. The Department of Health has now launched the digital version which is available here.

After 36 years of service, John Bates said farewell from Public Health Microbiology with a large number of people seeing him off on long service leave, and eventually retirement. John has always been a champion of research and innovation and never failed to recommend purchases of books for the library - if only so he could read them himself.

Lucretia and members of the FSS Human Ethics Committee recently presented at the Bi-annual Australasian Ethics Network Conference in Townsville. Read more about this presentation below. A number of staff have attended and presented at conferences recently. If you have been one of these people, please contact Trish in the library to deposit your presentation, and so we can add your attendance into the ‘success register’.
Staff publications


New NHMRC website launched


Some key features of the new site include:
* new search capability
* updated ‘Funding finder ’to make it easier to find the grant that's right for you.
  https://nhmrc.gov.au/funding/find-funding
* clearer content that's easier for all users to understand
* organised information so you can find it fast.

Lynda.com

Lynda.com is an elearning subscription service that includes over 5,500 courses and over 136,000 video tutorials. Topics include Windows 10, Office 365, Google Docs, photography, web development, marketing, IT, business management, and job seeking. Experts create and deliver all courses as well as provide supplemental materials like exercise files and relevant work samples.

SLQ members have free access to Lynda.com, both onsite at the State Library or offsite from your home, office or mobile device. Instructions on how to access http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/search/eresources/lynda.com
New research projects

Identification and instrumental analysis of non-schedule Nootropics and GABAergic supplements
Principal investigator: Vicky Cusack – Forensic Chemistry; Research supervisor: Dr Karen Blakey – Forensic Chemistry; Student placement: Caitlin Keller – Griffith University
Nootropics and GABAergic supplements are now widely available online and promoted to provide better cognitive ability. In reality, such products are often failed clinical trial candidates or overseas medications. They are not legislated and users often have little understanding of their detrimental health benefits. The aim of this project is to expand the analytical capability of the Forensic Chemistry laboratory to detect new, non-scheduled Nootropics and GABAergic materials and to provide this information to both law enforcement and health agencies.

Deposition of actinides via lanthanide hydroxide deposition
Principal investigator: Peter Medley – Radiation and Nuclear Sciences; Co-investigator: Sian Patterson – Radiation and Nuclear Sciences; Research supervisor: Dr Ross Kleinschmidt – Radiation and Nuclear Sciences
This project aims to develop rapid methods for preparation of sources for alpha spectrometry using lanthanide hydroxide precipitation techniques.

Investigation of I-methylamphetamine (I-MA) detections
Principal investigator: Simon Collett – Forensic Chemistry; Research team: Dr Jim Carter – Organic Chemistry and Helen Eldridge – Forensic Chemistry
Until recently it was assumed that nearly all methylamphetamine (MA) present on the Queensland drug market was the potent d-isomer, produced mainly from the conversion of pseudoephedrine. With reports of increased importations of MA, the Illicit Drug Group has encountered several cases with exhibits that have contained I-MA. This project aims to characterise and gain knowledge on the production and possible source of newly encountered I-MA containing exhibits to inform relevant authorities.

Radiological Baseline Reconstruction – Standard Method Guideline Development
Principal investigator: Dr Ross Kleinschmidt – Radiation and Nuclear Sciences; Research team: Drew Watson, Peter Medley, Pushpendra Chauhan, Kathy Coles – Radiation and Nuclear Sciences
The process required to rehabilitate / remediate both legacy sites and current practices relies on having baseline, and/or background radiological conditions prior to commencement of the operation. Modern practices are required to compile this information prior to commencement of operations, however, in many cases, especially for legacy sites, this information is not available. This project aims to develop a standardised methodology for reconstruction of radiological baseline conditions at locations impacted by anthropogenic activities.

New book in the library

Light in Forensic science: Issues and applications edited by Giorgia Miolo, Jacqueline L Stair and Mire Zioh (2018) [Click to request a loan] The identification and quantification of material present and collected at a crime scene are critical requirements in investigative analyses. Forensic analysts use a variety of tools and techniques to achieve this, many of which use light. Light is not always the forensic analyst’s friend however, as light can degrade samples and alter results. This book will be of interest to students and researchers in the fields of photochemistry, photobiology, toxicology and forensic science.
Source: https://pubs.rsc.org/en/content/ebook/978-1-78262-768-5
Upcoming events

October 2018

November 2018
Queensland Annual Chemistry Symposium (QACS) 23 November 2018, Griffith University Nathan Campus, Qld.

December 2018
AMSI BioInfo 3-7 December 2018 The University of Western Australia http://bis.amsi.org.au/
3rd Queensland Mass Spectrometry Symposium 6-7 December 2018, QUT Gardens Point, Qld https://www.qut.edu.au/institute-for-future-environments/about/events/qmss-2018
BIG DATA in Australian research - have your say

The Australian Academy of Science invites feedback by 31 October 2018 for a set of 'Ten Questions' that have been developed to capture community views.

This project is developing a national framework and strategy to enable Australian research to exploit opportunities and overcome challenges arising from the revolution in open and big data technologies, and from developments in data science and machine learning.  Find out more

NHMRC news

Key application dates:
2018 Centre of Research Excellence: open for applications 24 October 2018; minimum data due 21 November 2018; applications close 5 December 2018.
Grant guidelines will be available on GrantConnect

Targeted Call for Research (TCR) into the human health effect of PFAS
A national research program into the human health effect of PFAS has been established. A TCR, a one-time solicitation for grant applications to address this issue, will commence in late 2018.

Nominate to participate in peer review panels for 2019
Researchers are invited to nominate to be considered for appointment to NHMRC expert review panels. ‘How to’ instructions within RGMS are available here.

Commonwealth Data Sharing and Release Legislation
The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet is drafting new legislation about data sharing and release. The Department is hosting roundtable consultations to seek advice on ethical data use, technical best practice, and the latest industry and international developments in data sharing. For information or to register for the October roundtable consultations, please click here.

Webinar: how FAIR is your data?

Copyright, licensing and reuse
Thurs 1 Nov 12:00 - 13:00 AEDT

Baden Appleyard, a barrister and expert in copyright and licensing for research data, will discuss copyright, the importance of licensing data to enable appropriate reuse, and the Creative Commons licensing framework and how it applies to data owners, reusers and those providing access to data. Register here.
John Bates farewell

Over 100 staff from business areas across all Queensland Health came to Forensic and Scientific Services on 14 September to celebrate the retirement of John Bates. He started his career employed as a research assistant in QIMR before moving to the Laboratory of Microbiology and Pathology in George Street in 1984, where he joined the Bacteriology Laboratory beginning his 36 years of service with Queensland Health. John has been the supervisor of Forensic and Scientific Services (FSS) Public Health Microbiology (PHM) for over 25 years. In this role he is responsible for services provided by Public Health Microbiology to Queensland public health units, private pathology laboratories, Universities and other agencies both federal and state.

John has an active and very public profile within public health science in Australia. He is highly active within the Public Health Laboratory Network, and advocates for public health issues at a national and international level, representing Queensland Health in OzFoodNet, Infectious Disease Emergency Response Group, the Environmental Health Standing Committee, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee and the Communicable Diseases Network Australia.

Dr Kari Jarvinen Director and Public Health Physician, Metro South Public Health Unit said, 'John Bates has been an integral part of public health microbiology for us in Public Health Units, with his keen readiness to assist in solving our diagnostic dilemmas. His encyclopaedic memory of outbreaks caused by bacteria has been of tremendous assistance in our outbreak investigations, not to mention his first-hand expertise in cooking methods and their potential microbiological pitfalls!'

John will be taking some well-deserved time with his family and travelling the world before he officially retires from Queensland Health. We will miss John’s happy face around the corridors and our meetings. His expertise and personality will be sorely missed by Forensic and Scientific Services staff.

AEN Townsville 2018

The bi-annual Australasian Ethics Network (AEN) conference was held in Townsville this year. Hosting speakers from as far afield as Canada, Singapore, Fiji and New Zealand, this forum brought together over 200 research ethics committee members, administrators, researchers and research support staff across both academic and health settings to discuss the theme 'Bridging the Barriers - Understanding misconceptions'. FSS was well represented with attendance from Dr Trevor Watkins - Forensic Radiologist, Dr Philip Storey - Chair FSS-HEC, Prof Eleanor Milligan - member FSS-HEC, Dr Jenny Jones - member FSS-HEC and Lucretia Angus - FSS Research and Ethics Coordinator who challenged conference delegates with their thought provoking presentation 'Mortui Vivos Docent (Let the dead teach the living): The Ethics of Research and Deceased 'Participants'. This presentation brought together diverse perspectives to explore the unique ethical considerations of undertaking ethically robust research with deceased persons. Delegates were asked to consider the difficult questions facing the FSS-HEC: Where does the deceased person fit within the spirit of the National Statement and the values that underpin it? How does the concept of informed consent relate to teaching/learning/research involving deceased persons? What does it mean to say a person is deceased or dead? Can deceased persons be harmed? Can a deceased person be a research participant? Is a deceased person a member of a moral community?

With more questions than answers, further discussion on this topic will take place on Friday 12 October at the SW Qld Ethics training day on 'End of Life Research' hosted by Bond University.