

Health and Ageing Research Team

HART News

Thank you for your continuing contribution to the HART Study of ageing! In 2014 we completed the 6th wave of data collection with participants in the Health, Work and Retirement Study who are now aged 63 to 79 years old. This research program began in 2006 and is now one of New Zealand's longest running studies of health and ageing.

With the 2016 survey, the HART team will **celebrate a decade of research** into healthy ageing and retirement in the New Zealand population. This is a huge achievement and the team wants participants know how valuable this information is for improving health and wellbeing in New Zealand both now and into the future.

With your help, national and international research into supporting older persons in the community has been significantly enhanced, particularly in the areas of alcohol consumption, loneliness, quality of life, the Christchurch earthquake, care-giving, volunteering & unpaid work, vision & mobility, driving, wealth, and retirement planning.

This newsletter aims to let you know about what is happening with the HART studies as well as how the information is continuing to contribute to national and international discussion of healthy ageing and the visions of this for the future. This update will include information on what we have been up to in 2013-2015, key findings, plans and support for the project beyond 2015 and what the researchers have been doing closer to home.

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From left: Dr Andy Towers, Dr Jo Taylor, Dr Polly Yeung, Dr Juliana Mansvelt, Prof Fiona Alpass, Prof Christine Stephens, Prof Steve LaGrow, Brendan Stevenson, and Dr Mary Breheny



Dr Sally Keeling



Dr Rachel Pond



Vicki Beagley

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hart.massey.ac.nz

Putting the HART in science

An important part of the Health, Work and Retirement study is disseminating our findings to national and international discussions about health and wellbeing in older adults.

In the past 24 months alone HART researchers have authored 22 articles in peer-reviewed journals and presented study findings to both national and international forums including presentations in France, the USA, Japan, South Korea and Australia. Professors Christine Stephens and Fiona Alpass have given invited and keynote addresses on the challenges and strengths of older persons in the community.

These presentations ensure that health experts from all over the world are aware of the New Zealand Health, Work and Retirement study and allow us to contribute to the broader discussion on health in older populations across the world.

HART at home and in the media

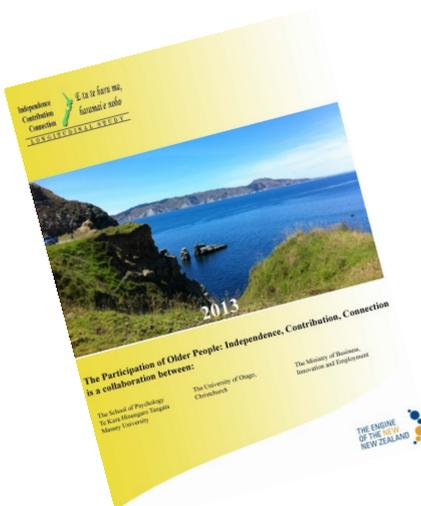
HART researchers have also been working to get the word out nationally including engaging with industry and community forums including the New Zealand Association of Gerontology, the New Zealand Retirement Village Association, and meeting with ministries and community groups.

Professor Alpass talked to *The Listener* in March 2015 about the influence of money, relationships and retirement for health and happiness in older adults, as well as the importance of staying socially connected in retirement for health and happiness.

Professor Stephens was interviewed by Mary Wilson on Checkpoint (National Radio) in 2014. They discussed the need for serious planning for more suitable housing for older people in New Zealand.

Report: Findings from the Inclusion, Contribution and Connections (ICC) study

HART has just released the first report from the 2013 ICC study. This report provides some key messages about healthy ageing in older New Zealanders.



- ◆ *Benefits of cultural engagement:* Māori participants remained engaged with marae in similar numbers throughout the transition from work to retirement. A marae role was associated with interactions with whanau and others from the Māori community as well as higher reported life satisfaction, purpose in life, and quality of life, even after controlling for gender, age, years retired, and economic position.
- ◆ *Demand for small local houses:* Nearly half of participants saw themselves moving house in the near future, with the majority of these looking to move to a smaller home in the same area. The most common reason for moving were to move to a smaller home which needs less work or maintenance (67%), and to downsize to release finances (36%).
- ◆ *The digital divide:* Over 50% of participants reported daily internet use, while nearly 16% said that they never used the internet. The internet was most frequently used for seeking information (85%), followed by connecting with friends and family (84%). Those with lowest socioeconomic status were least likely to use the internet and most likely to report feelings of loneliness and isolation.

For the full initial report on the 2013 ICC survey see the Publications and Newsletters section of the HART website: hart.massey.ac.nz



Prof Christine Stephens presents on the use of the internet by older New Zealanders at the International Congress of Applied Psychology, Paris, 2014.

Looking to 2016: celebrating a decade of the Health, Work and Retirement survey!

In 2016 the HART team will celebrate a decade of research into healthy ageing and retirement in the New Zealand population. That's right—for some HWR participants it is 10 years since you first responded to the survey! Since then, biannual contact has enabled the development of a unique resource providing valuable insight into factors associated with healthy ageing in our communities.



Some years participants have felt better or worse than the year before or often nothing much has changed! All these insights are important and, moving forward, our primary aims will be to examine what has influenced these changes over time, for persons aged 55 and over in the NZ community.

The 2016 Survey

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment will provide \$1.867 million in support of the Health, Work and Retirement study over the next four years to answer two important questions about the wellbeing of the growing population of older people in NZ: 1) What kinds of retired lives do New Zealanders want and how can this be supported, and; 2) how do early life events and wider societal changes, impact on quality of life in later years, and how can these be addressed?

Findings will be shared with government ministries, housing organisations, health care providers, City and District Councils, community and social services, and advocacy bodies. These findings will be used to develop information services, housing provision, and policies which support the health of all older people.

Planning under way

Planning is now well underway for the 2016 wave of the survey. We will be in contact with our current participants again and will also be selecting a new random sample from the electoral role to invite additional New Zealand residents aged 55-75 to participate.

Linking to health records: an international standard for national health surveys

In 2013 the HART first asked permission from participants to link their survey data to health records kept by the New Zealand Health Information Service, such as lifetime health diagnoses and levels of health service utilisation. This information will provide accurate health-related information and meet international best practice standards for national health and ageing surveys. Such linkages allow researchers to answer questions that neither survey nor health information service records could address alone. This allows the team to provide accurate data for use by national policy makers and for use in cross-national comparisons with our sister studies.



As for all data collected by HART, all personally identifying information is removed from health records, with names and contact data kept in a separate database stored on a secure server. This important data-linkage initiative will also be offered in the 2016 wave of the survey. If you have any questions about the data linkage study or wish to participate and have not yet consented, please contact the HART research team: **Free phone 0800 100 134 or Email hart@massey.ac.nz**



Fiona in Gallipoli for ANZAC centenary Dawn Service

Professor Fiona Alpass travelled to Gallipoli for the 100 year commemorations to honour her grandfather, Milton Alpass, who served in the first world war in the Sinai and Palestine campaign. More than 10,500 gathered for the service at ANZAC Cove.

Fiona (center-front, blanket) attends the ANZAC day dawn service at the Anzac Commemorative Site, Gallipoli, Turkey [Photo: Joe Armao for the Sydney Herald].

Professor Steve LaGrow retiring

In April 2015 Massey University's Steve LaGrow retired as Professor of Rehabilitation Studies and Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor in the College of Health. Steve has over 35 years of experience teaching and researching issues impacting the quality of life of persons who are blind or have low vision. Steve has received honours for his work including the Lawrence E. Blaha Memorial Award from Division Nine of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired and was inducted into the Western Michigan University's Blindness and Low Vision Studies Outstanding Alumni Academy in 2003.



Introducing Dr Joanne Allen

Jo joined the HART in April 2015 as the Research Officer for the Health, Work and Retirement Survey. Jo was awarded her PhD from the University of Newcastle, Australia, and has worked in a range of research roles including cognitive science, inpatient research settings and population surveys of health and well being. Most recently Jo has managed mental health promotion projects aimed at remote areas of New South Wales as Program Development Coordinator for the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program supported by NSW Health. Jo has experience in the management of longitudinal population surveys and her thesis focused on factors impacting the physical and mental health of older persons and how these may differ across urban to remote communities.

To update us with any changes in your contact details, please contact Research Officer:

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Free phone 0800 100 134

Email hart@massey.ac.nz

As our primary contact with participants is via post, we are always keen to stay up to date with your full postal contact details! Please also let us know about any other details that may need updating, including land line and cell numbers, and email addresses. Please quote your full name when you do make contact with us.