



# QMWS news

*Queensland Medical Women's Society*



Quarterly Newsletter

May 2010

## President's report May 2010



In the Weekend Australian of the 24th-25th of April, Richard Littlejohn, a British commentator, discussed episodes of political correctness during the 13 years of the British Labour government. One such episode described officials in Gateshead, UK touring fish and chips shops and confiscating salt shakers with more than five holes in them. The premise was that if there were fewer holes, then there was less ability to cover the take-away with hypertension-inducing salt. Unfortunately they didn't consider removing the lid.

With increasing concerns about the burgeoning cost of healthcare and diseases caused by our very affluence, as the front line of preventative health we have to be prepared to respond. Certainly as Australia's waist line grows, it is timely we hear Trisha O'Moore-Sullivan talk about obesity. We need to confront these challenges with a calm, level headed approach rather than being in the invidious position where change is forced on us by poorly constructed, bureaucratic driven plans. This presentation should be thought provoking, as Jane Turner's discussion of childhood issues at the March meeting was. I look forward to seeing you there.

**Edwina Duhig**

### QMWS COMMITTEE '10

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# Stories of Hope: Resilience in the Face of Adversity

**Dr Jane Turner** - Senior Lecturer, Discipline of Psychiatry, University of Queensland.

Jane has been a member of the QMWS for many years and we were delighted that she has recently been awarded her PhD. Her research has been in the areas of the emotional impact of cancer, particularly advanced cancer and the effects of this on families, and strategies to promote wellness in patients who have been treated for cancer.

She spoke to us at our March meeting on "Stories of Hope: Resilience in the Face of Adversity", focussing on the needs of children and adolescents whose parents have cancer. Most of the research in this area comes from a mental health rather than an oncology background, but there is also considerable literature on children who faced adversity such as institutionalisation, poverty, parental depression or violence.

Protection from adversity does not necessarily confer resilience. There is benefit for a child from having a good relationship with at least one adult who cares about them and their well being. Good parenting is especially important for overcoming serious chronic adversity. This includes the demonstration of affection and warmth, expressing concern, a predictable environment, acceptance, and being made to feel worthwhile.

Depending on the stage of development, a child believes they can control their life - for example by making wishes, by aligning themselves with a powerful person who can control the situation or by attributing the situation to luck and seeing themselves as unlucky. Having a parent with a serious illness challenges this concept.

Withholding information from children "for their protection" provides a setting for the development of false beliefs, feelings of guilt or anxiety, and a sense of responsibility for the child to fix the difficulties facing the family. For a child to learn that they have been misled, with even the noblest of intents, provides a context for mistrust, anger and resentment.

Jane talked about strategies to help children in this situation. If a child has a perceived area of competence which is valued by themselves or others, this may be protective. Children should be enabled to do things in "acceptable chunks", within their capabilities, over which they gain mastery. Activities such as sport and other clubs are beneficial. Children should have appropriate tasks and chores which they carry out for the benefit of the family, but this should be discussed with them, so they do not feel too much responsibility has been put upon them.

Resilient children are more likely to discuss problems at home, especially if they have been encouraged to face up to difficulties in a constructive way. Parents, even when dealing with serious illness, have an important role in monitoring and supervising children. Positive school experiences also contribute to better outcomes. The school should be aware of the issues at home and teachers can play a powerful role. There should also be some caution that the child or adolescent's response to adversity does not generate its own set of difficulties ("getting in the with the wrong crowd", substance abuse etc). Parents should accept the offers of others to help in practical ways, with meals, transport, household chores.

Parents should allow the child to talk about their concerns and feelings, to work things out for themselves, and to see that they themselves are upset - "there are tears to be shed". Jane illustrated her talk with many moving examples of her experiences with families. We thank her for her insight, knowledge and wisdom, and for sharing it with us.



*“Parents should allow the child to talk about their concerns and feelings, to work things out for themselves, and to see that they themselves are upset - “there are tears to be shed”. Jane illustrated her talk with many moving examples of her experiences with families. We thank her for her insight, knowledge and wisdom, and for sharing it with us.”*

# SWIM News

## March

SWIM held a classy Cocktails night at Sling in the West End in mid March. The clever mixologists even created a signature SWIM cocktail! A wonderful night was had by all.

SWIM members at St. Lucia campus hit the road to connect with our Ipswich campus members for an afternoon of tea and goodies!! Despite the rain, it allowed a chance to meet and greet new members and catch up with established ones. We are looking forward to more networking between campuses in the future.

SWIM is also partnering with TIME (Towards International Medical Equality) to promote a UNMDG project supporting maternal health, specifically in Indonesia. Further details on the projects and upcoming fundraisers will be available as the project develops!

A number of our members will be supporting breast cancer research by participating in the Mother's Day Classic run/walk on Sunday 9 May 2010. Details on the run itself can be found at <http://mothersdayclassic.com.au/event/qld/brisbane>.



Our next event will be a Q and A evening for SWIM members on May 12th at 6 pm on the St. Lucia campus. This is a chance for SWIM members to be inspired by women who have forged their way, and learn about their journeys.

### The SWIM 2010 SWIM executive is

President: **Johanna Elms**

Immediate Past President: **Melinda Stanton**

VP Academic: **Lucy Mudie**

VP Social: **Nim Wickramasekara**

Secretary: **Keeri Young**

Treasurer: **Marilla Dickfos**

Sponsorship: **Aaron Py**

Liaison & Advocacy: **Barbara Bradshaw**

## Australian Federation of Medical Women (AFMW)

Remember, as a member of the QMWS, you are also a member of the Australian Federation of Medical Women and the Medical Women's International Association

The AFMW newsletter has all sorts of interesting articles - these include:

- UNIFEM Global Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls
- 2010 HealthEd seminars
- Gender Equality On-Line Forum
- Climate Change Connections: A Resource Kit on Climate, Population and Gender
- President's Report January 2010
- MWIA Update December 2009
- Guidelines for gender equality programmes in science
- Health Systems are Failing Women Worldwide
- The Costs and Benefits of Investing in Family Planning and Maternal and Newborn Health

**The QMWS is part of the AFMW!**  
**They have a very informative website**  
**- why don't you check it out at [afmw.org.au](http://afmw.org.au)**

- Facing a changing world : women, population and climate
- Dr Catherine Hamlin Receives Right Livelihood Award
- Serious Women's Business Serious News and Views (SNV) Issue 10
- AFMW Annual General Meeting 2009

*You can assess the AFMW website & [afmw.org.au](http://afmw.org.au)*





**The Queensland Medical Women's Society  
Invites you to our**

## **May Dinner**

*At*

**The Moreton Room, The United Services Club,  
183 Wickham Tce, Spring Hill.**

**Tuesday (note not Wednesday) 25<sup>th</sup> May 2010  
7pm start**

**The war on obesity:  
It's time to take up arms**

**To be presented by:**

### **Dr Trisha O'Moore Sullivan**

Trisha is Deputy Director of Diabetes and Endocrinology at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. She heads the multi-disciplinary obesity clinic, cares for endocrinology and diabetes patients, and has an Adult Prader-Willi clinic. She is a senior lecturer at the University of Queensland and a Research Fellow at the Diamantina Institute, leading a clinical research group with a focus on obesity related complications. She is an investigator within the Centre for Clinical Research Excellence at PAH where prospective interventions to modify early cardiovascular disease in obese patients form the basis of her PhD studies. She is involved in teaching and examining medical students, residents and physician trainees, Honours and PhD students, and is a local examiner for the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. Trisha is married to Tim Sullivan and they have two children.

***Cost \$25 (non-members \$40 and students \$10)- payable on the night***

***Enquiries to Edwina Duhig on 0418 183 152 or Email [Edwina\\_Duhig@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Edwina_Duhig@health.qld.gov.au)  
Parking is available behind the United Services Club***



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