



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

'Diagnosis, Management & Outcomes of Depression in Primary Care'

diamond

diamond Newsletter | DECEMBER 2013

A MESSAGE FROM THE STUDY LEADER



As another year draws to a close, on behalf of the *diamond* study research team I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued participation in the study.

We appreciate that you are often faced with competing demands on your time; however we can assure you that the time and effort you commit to completing the

postal surveys and telephone interviews is very much appreciated and, as you will read in this December issue of the study newsletter, is leading towards some very important developments in understanding people's experience with depression, stress and worries.

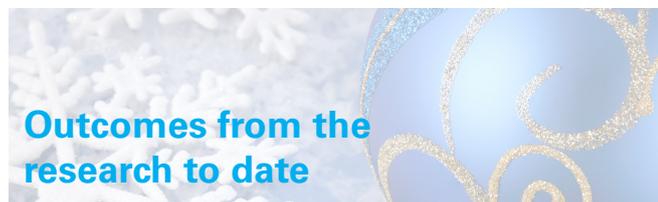
“We wish you a safe and happy festive season and hope you will continue to participate in the study for year 2014.”

With 2 years to go until we reach 10 years (which is what we have current funding to undertake) we look forward to bringing you further updates on the progress of our research.



Prof Jane Gunn

Season's Greetings



Outcomes from the research to date

We are committed to ensuring that the findings from the *diamond* study are used to inform clinical practice (the way health professionals practise) and mental health policy at the government level. To this end, members of the *diamond* team have delivered in excess of 75 national and international presentations about the research at conferences, government departments, and other research institutions since the study began. These conferences consist of delegates including general practitioners (family doctors), psychologists and psychiatrists. We have also presented our findings to the Department of Health (State Government of Victoria), Department of Health (Federal Government of Australia), and with *beyondblue* to influence their policies.

READING FOR DEPRESSION

Has reading helped with your depression?

Tegan Usher, a research Masters student working with the *diamond* team is interested in identifying books people with depression find helpful. If you have 15 minutes she would appreciate you completing an online survey to share which books you have found helpful.

Go to www.surveymonkey.com/s/R4D or scan the QR code using your smart phone and QR reader.



You can also find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Reading4depression

This study has been approved by The University of Melbourne Research Committee
HREC Number:1339740.1

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PRIMARY CARE RESEARCH UNIT

A primary care-based longitudinal study

With your contribution, and that of other study participants the following achievements have been made possible.

Between 2012 and 2013 the diamond study team has:

- completed data collection for the *diamond* sub-study investigating genetic links with depression, stress and worry over time; and
- analysed the DNA extracted from saliva donated by 342 diamond study participants.

This cutting edge research has gained national and international attention. Two reports of initial results have been published in the American Journal of Medical Genetics, another has been submitted for publication, and a presentation of the work delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Biological Psychiatry Scientific Meeting in Brisbane, Australia.

Analysis of some of the data to date has led us to identify that:

- quitting smoking is not associated with increases in symptom severity among people with depressive symptoms; and
- people who have someone to talk to about their problems are much less likely to have persistent depressive symptoms when observed over a two year period.

WHAT'S NEW FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

The *diamond* research team is working on developing a new mental health emotional wellbeing care planning tool which will be able to identify people at risk of having poor emotional wellbeing over time. This tool will help clinicians make decisions about who is likely to overcome their symptoms without intensive treatments and who will benefit the most from additional therapies. Extensive data collected over the past eight years has made this possible.

Professor Jane Gunn and Dr Sandra Davidson are also part of the Centre for Research Excellence in Mental Health Systems Improvement (CREMSI) which has been funded by the Commonwealth Government via the National Health and Medical Research Council to improve the model of health care delivery for the Australian health care system. Data from *diamond* is helping the CREMSI group understand how people with depression currently use health services and how service delivery could be improved.

We are also continuing to work with national and international experts to further develop our understanding of:

- the links between physical health and depression, stress and worries and the most effective management/treatment options;
- the use of books to cope with depression;
- the role of alternative therapies in the management of depression stress and worries;
- use of telephone helplines by *diamond* participants focussing on frequent callers and health service use of people with suicidal thinking and depressive symptoms; and
- resilience and coping with depressive symptoms.



Mental Health in Primary Care research team

Photo: Peter Casamento



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HAVE YOU RECENTLY MOVED, CHANGED PHONE NUMBERS ... ?

If your address or phone number has changed, please fill in your new details below and return to us or call us on +61 3 8344 7449 with your new details.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode: _____

Phone number: _____