



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

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

diamond

diamond Newsletter | AUGUST 2014

A MESSAGE FROM THE STUDY LEADER



Prof Jane Gunn
diamond Study Principal
Investigator and General
Practitioner

On behalf of the *diamond* study team I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued participation in the study, and for the time and effort you have devoted to it.

The *diamond* study aims to further inform GPs, health organisations and the government about how they can best help people to stay emotionally well.

The study has been running since 2005, making it the longest-running study of its kind in primary care in Australia. At this stage we have secured funding to complete a tenth year of research. Meanwhile, the *diamond* research team continues to collate and analyse the data that we have collected from you over the past nine years.

Some of the questions you have been answering in the telephone interviews and written surveys may seem familiar or repetitive; however, asking the same questions each year allows the *diamond* research team to see how changes in emotional and physical health, relationships and life circumstances impact on overall wellbeing.

If you have received a survey recently, you may have received a flyer regarding the *diamond* Draw. The draw is intended as a small way of thanking you for your commitment to participating in the study. Further information regarding the *diamond* Draw is included below.

We look forward to bringing you further updates on the progress of our research.

Prof Jane Gunn

Why some but not all?

Investigating how people's genes and life experiences interact.

Have you ever wondered why people who experience the same thing respond in different ways? If you have, you are not alone. In fact, the *diamond* genetics project is trying to answer this question using genetic and life experience information collected from *diamond* participants.

In a recent analysis we examined whether or not different versions of the serotonin transporter gene affect the way people react to abusive experiences in childhood and influence their experiences with depression. Serotonin is a chemical that is thought to play a role in regulating mood. The serotonin transporter is responsible for moving serotonin around in the brain. There are three versions of the serotonin transporter: "low" activity, "medium" activity, and "high" activity. Using DNA (the molecule that contains your genes) we determined the version of the serotonin transporter for each of the participants in the *diamond* genetics project. We found that people with the "low"

activity version of the serotonin transporter were more likely to have negative experiences with depression if they had experienced childhood abuse. However, people with the "low" activity version that had not experienced childhood abuse had similar experiences with depression to people with the "medium" or "high" versions of the serotonin transporter. These findings suggest that individuals with the "low" activity version of the serotonin transporter may react to abusive experiences in childhood more severely than those without the "low" activity version. In the future these findings may assist doctors in identifying individuals at greatest risk for depression and/or aid in personalising treatment.



diamond Project

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PRIMARY CARE RESEARCH UNIT

“

The *diamond* study thanks you for your involvement over the past nine years”

The *diamond* Draw: a small gesture to thank you

We would like to thank you for your involvement and support since 2005. To acknowledge the commitment you have shown to this important research, we invite you to participate in the *diamond* Draw.



If you complete and return your survey booklet within four weeks from the date it is posted to you, and complete your telephone interview within the same timeframe, the team will enter you into a prize draw. The first draw will be in November 2014, and five subsequent draws will take place at regular intervals until the end of 2016. With five winners drawn in each draw, thirty *diamond* participants will each win a \$100 voucher. Winners will be informed by phone and mail.

If you would like to opt out of the draw, or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the *diamond* team on (03) 8344 7449.

Introducing ...

Caroline is a post-doctoral fellow who completed her PhD at Lund University in Sweden in 2006. Her previous work has focused on cultural competency and medical education. She is now associated with The Center for Family Medicine at Karolinska Institute, Sweden, as part of the Mental Health Research Group. She is on sabbatical from her position as a GP registrar at Stuvsta Primary Care Center in Stockholm, Sweden. Caroline is currently using the *diamond* data to present information about who does and does not pay out of pocket to visit the GP. She is also investigating if there are clinical signs that could be used early on to predict risk for long-term depression and individualise treatment.



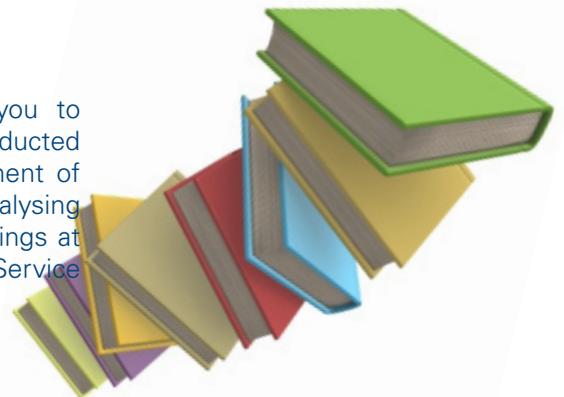
Caroline Wachtler

Reading for Depression study: Update



Tegan Usher

In the previous *diamond* newsletter we invited you to participate in the Reading for Depression study conducted by Tegan Usher, a Master's student at the Department of General Practice. Tegan has been working on analysing the results. She will be presenting some of the findings at the Primary Health Care Research and Information Service conference in July.



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: _____