



Newsletter of the Australian
Institute for Musculoskeletal
Science (AIMSS)

Volume 2, Issue 2
April-June 2017

Western Health



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My AIMSS



Hello, my name is **Dr. Sharon Brennan-Olsen** and I am a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne and also a Program Director in Population Health – Musculoskeletal Health at AIMSS.

I excitedly joined Professor Gustavo Duque at AIMSS in 2016, although having been affiliated with the Institute since its original formation. For my undergraduate degree I majored in sociology, and I worked for many years in social welfare where I became interested in the disproportionate social- and health-related burdens experienced by socially disadvantaged persons. One of my life-goals was to undertake a PhD, and so when faced with the opportunity to do this in the field of musculoskeletal health, and including a focus on social determinants, I was delighted and even more excited when my PhD in Epidemiology attracted the support of a 3 year NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarship.

I developed a strong evidence-base that showed, similar to other diseases such as diabetes, a social gradient also existed for osteoporosis and risk of fragility fracture. At the time of my PhD completion, my track record included 14 first-authored publications and some small grant successes, and so I was well-placed to attract my 4 year NHMRC Early Career Fellowship, and then subsequently a 4 year NHMRC Career Development Fellowship. At AIMSS, my program of research has now expanded into social disparities in, and social determinants of, utilisation of health care for musculoskeletal diseases, and more recently into biological mechanisms that may underpin those social gradients of disease onset and progression. The downside of my research dedication is the ability to 'put it down'; so what makes me turn off the computer for the day? It's called home. The place I call home is our beachside 'shack' on the Bellarine Peninsula, some two hours away from AIMSS; however, the length of commute fades into obscurity when considering my research output and opportunities at AIMSS. A cosy haven for myself and my husband (childhood sweethearts), our home is a peaceful and relaxing retreat until overtaken by our ever expanding brood of grandchildren; little ones that I absolutely adore, and believe could be the next generation of AIMSS researchers.

From our Director



AIMSS is outdoors

AIMSS was created almost five years ago with the specific Mission of "improving the health and wellbeing of the communities in which we live and work through innovative and integrative musculoskeletal research and advocacy." I am glad to report that, five years later, this mission is being accomplished.

Several activities have been implemented in the last two years that are helping us to fulfill our Mission. Amongst these activities, we opened new health services aimed at the community. These services, which are located at AIMSS, exemplify an effective combination of research and health care programs. Our Falls and Fracture Clinic, which opened last October, has fully evaluated and designed a care plan to more than 80 patients at high risk of falls, fractures, and disability from Western Melbourne. Our Gait and Balance Gym (Gabagym), an innovative service aimed to train frail older patients at high risk of falls and disability before joining exercise programs in the community, has several ongoing exercise groups running on site. In addition, our densitometry services, which are the only service in Melbourne offering body composition analysis for sarcopenia and falls risk, has expanded its services to five days a week. Other ongoing programs linking AIMSS with the community include our Fracture Liaison Service, which has assessed more than 500 patients in just a year, and our very successful Osteosarcopenia Roadshow, which targets General Practitioners in the community, and will be the subject of one of my future columns in this Bulletin.

In summary, our "raison d'être" at AIMSS goes beyond the generation of world-class research and researchers. We effectively serve our local communities and closely follow the Mission that our founding stakeholders designed for our Institute. Our local community is progressively knowing about AIMSS, and it is our job to improve their health and wellbeing through our very successful, evidence-based and innovative models of care.

Prof. Gustavo Duque – Director Australian Institute for Musculoskeletal Science (AIMSS)

Our Team Member of the Month



Steven Phu is an Accredited Exercise Physiologist and Research Assistant with strong foundations in AIMSS, the University of Melbourne and Western Health. His role encompasses work in both clinical and research areas.

As an exercise physiologist, Steven is responsible for conducting assessments at the Falls and Fractures Clinic and implementing exercise programs for falls prevention at the Gait and Balance Gym (Gabagym). Active areas of research include the effect of various programs on falls and fracture prevention, sarcopenia and frailty in older adults. Having recently moved to Melbourne from Sydney, Steven has been slowly exploring the sights and food in Melbourne. In his spare time he enjoys reading, keeping fit playing soccer, camping and is often planning for his next adventure.

AIMSS Publication of the Month

Sarcopenic Obesity and Its Temporal Associations With Changes in Bone Mineral Density, Incident Falls, and Fractures in Older Men: The Concord Health and Ageing in Men Project. Scott D, Seibel M, Cumming R, et al. J Bone Miner Res. 2017 Mar;32(3):575-583.

This paper concludes that in older men, EWGSOP-defined sarcopenic obesity is associated with increased fall rates over 2 years, and FNIH-defined sarcopenic obese men have increased fracture risk over 6 years compared with non-sarcopenic obese men.



Australian and New Zealand Society for Sarcopenia and Frailty Research

2017 ANNUAL MEETING • ADELAIDE, SA • 24 & 25 NOVEMBER

Abstract submission and registration for the 2017 Annual Meeting of the ANZSSFR are open. A great networking opportunity and the best setting to present your research results:

www.anzssfrmeeting.com.au

Short News:

- Welcome to our new Members of AIMSS: Program Director **A/Prof. Itamar Levinger** and Clinical Trials Assistant **Michael McLaughlin**
- Welcome back Hadeer Fatlee (Clinical Research Assistant) from her maternity leave
- Our best wishes to our Project Director Dr. David Scott in his new position at Monash University
- We are recruiting for our clinical trial on a new treatment for older people with sarcopenia. For more information contact our Research Coordinator Merima via e-mail: mimm@unimelb.edu.au

Our Collaborator of the Month



Professor Svetlana Solovieva is Senior Scientist at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH), Helsinki: the FIOH specializes in well-being at work, research, advisory services and training.

Professor Solovieva leads a large program of research focusing on occupational exposures and musculoskeletal symptomatology, disability and disease. She is the lead developer of a physical Job Exposure Matrix (JEM) that utilized two large population surveys to construct the JEM and to test matrix performance. This year she is a Chief Investigator in one of our NHMRC applications, which was submitted by AIMSS' Program Manager Dr Sharon Brennan-Olsen. The collaboration between Professor Solovieva and Dr Brennan-Olsen also involves a data linkage analyses, currently underway, using the JEM and a large population-based dataset of ~44,000 individuals from 6 lower and middle income countries, the latter developed by the World Health Organization.

AIMSS Seminar Series

Our AIMSS Seminars for April and May have been a total success in terms of attendance, quality of the presentations, and outstanding speakers. Prof John Hamilton (University of Melbourne) & Prof Michael McClung from Oregon, USA, delighted the audience with their depth of experience and knowledge.

We hope to see you all at our next Seminars where we will learn from our outstanding national and international guest speakers.



Prof Duque Director of AIMSS presenting Profs. John Hamilton (left) and Michael McClung (right) with our traditional token of appreciation for their excellent presentations at our AIMSS Seminars for April and May.



Prof Duque presenting Prof Karen Dodd PVC, new Dean College of Health and Biomedicine, Victoria University who joined us at our May seminar.