

Clinical Reference Group (CRG)

Meeting 2/2018

Wednesday 17th October 2018

6:30 – 8:00 pm

Boardroom

Conference Room 1

Latrobe Regional Hospital campus and via teleconference and videoconference

Meeting Notes

1. Welcome and Apologies

Chair:

Dr Fred Edwards

In Attendance:

Ms Jeannette Douglas, Dr Ian Webb, Dr Jo McCubbin (video conference),

Ex Officio:

Professor Judi Walker (Principle Co-Investigator Gippsland – video conference)

Hazelwood Health Study Personnel:

Dr Jill Blackman (Senior Project Manager – videoconference), Associate Professor Fay Johnston (ELF Stream Lead – videoconference), Dr Juliana Betts (Former Public Health Medical Trainee - videoconference), Dr Sasha Taylor (Public Health Medical Trainee – videoconference), Melissa Peppin (Administrative Officer)

Apologies:

Ms Angela Scully, Dr Ryan Hoy, Associate Professor Paul Lee, Associate Professor Alistair Wright, Professor Michael Abramson

2. Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interest

No new member conflicts of interest were noted.

3. Confirmation of draft minutes from meeting held 18 April 2018

The notes of Meeting 1/2018, held on 18 April 2018 were endorsed as a true and accurate record by those members who had been present.

Action: Endorsed meeting notes to be uploaded to the Hazelwood Health Study website

4. Dissemination of findings

4.1. Recent outputs

4.1.1. Psychological Impacts: Interviews with Morwell residents about their experiences of the Hazelwood coal mine fire

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Dr Jill Blackman joined the meeting via videoconference for this item and provided a briefing to committee members on the findings, which were released a month prior to the meeting. The committee requested a link to the full report.

Action Item: Circulate preprint link

4.1.2. Schools Study: Impacts of the Hazelwood mine fire for students and staff from a specialist school which relocated during the smoke event

Dr Blackman presented the latest Schools Study report, which studies the impacts on student wellbeing (including increased anxiety and frustration, difficulty adjusting to the relocation environment, reduced sense of safety and a drop in both attendance and schoolwork completion) for students and staff from a specialist school which relocated during the smoke event. The committee were provided with the research summary prior to the meeting and requested a link to the full report.

Action Item: Circulate preprint link

4.2. Upcoming outputs

4.2.1. Adult Survey Volume 2: The relationship between Hazelwood mine fire smoke exposure and health outcomes

Dr Blackman presented the preliminary findings from the Adult Survey Volume 2, which is due to be released in November.

Research was conducted to determine if there is evidence that people in general, and susceptible sub-populations, who were heavily exposed to emissions from the Hazelwood mine fire, compared with otherwise similar people who were minimally exposed to emissions, have clinical or sub-clinical cardiovascular, respiratory or psychological conditions.

The committee spoke of the importance of mapping clinical or sub-clinical cardiovascular, respiratory or psychological conditions with specific terminology instead of using general terminology. For example, GPs would be interested in the specific breakdown of explicit conditions affecting their patients, and not just a general 'cancer' breakdown in the report. Dr Blackman acknowledged that this is a caveat for the research as the information used was self-reported, however, there is a stream set up for cancer results that will be able to provide detailed analysis on specific conditions.

The committee asked if it was possible for individuals to obtain their own individual results for this. Dr Blackman explained that the study will divulge an individual's results if they request this information.

4.2.2. Factors associated with hypertension and its management amongst older rural Australians living in the Latrobe Valley

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Dr Juliana Betts presented her preliminary research into the blood pressure management among older rural Australians via videoconference. The aims of this research are:

- To ascertain the prevalence of hypertension in an older rural Australian sample
- Identify factors associated with having hypertension and having treated or untreated hypertension amongst older, rural Australians.
- To provide useful, local baseline health information for consideration by the Latrobe Health Assembly when designing future public health programs.

Members of the committee queried why a cut off of 140/90mmHg was used for hypertension, with Dr Betts explaining that this level is frequently used in other studies and remains the standard for hypertension diagnosis in the RACGP guidelines (despite other guidelines suggesting lower cut off levels).

Dr Betts findings indicate a high proportion of participants had hypertension (defined as a known history of hypertension, taking antihypertensive medications or a measured blood pressure of $\geq 140/90$ mmHg). Dr Betts is currently preparing this report and is expecting to release the findings in early 2019.

4.2.3. ELF Reports Volume 2 & 3 – Indicators of lung and blood vessel function three years after the fire

Associate Professor Fay Johnston presented findings from the ELF Report Volumes 2 & 3 to the committee via videoconference.

The research found weak evidence for a link between higher mine fire smoke exposure in children who were aged up to two at the time of the mine fire and slightly increased blood vessel stiffness and lung stiffness, although these changes were very small. No associations were seen between mine fire smoke exposure and any of these health outcomes in children whose mothers were pregnant with them at the time of the fire. The research did, however, show that cigarette smoking during pregnancy was clearly linked with both blood vessel and lung changes in children.

Letters will be received by participating families in the coming week, and it is expected that some parents may visit their local GPs to discuss their children's results. Results will be distributed to participants a full week prior to the public release of findings.

4.2.4. Dissemination of findings timetable

Professor Judi Walker presented the dissemination of findings timetable for the remainder of the year. Professor Walker noted that the study is in the process of mapping 2019 priorities and release dates for findings. The committee requested an updated version of the dissemination of findings timetable prior to the next meeting.

Action Item: Circulate the Dissemination of Findings Timetable to the Clinical Reference Group

5. Study Status Report

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Professor Walker presented Power Point slides which summarised HHS Stream progress to date. Copies of the slides were included with the meeting papers circulated to CRG meeting participants.

6. Clinical Reference Group Membership

Professor Walker spoke about the need to refresh the membership of the Clinical Reference Group as we approach the end of the year. As more results from the various HHS study streams are finalised, we need to actively recruit local clinicians to provide valuable insight and interpretation of the findings for a public health and clinical setting. We will be taking an active recruitment approach to CRG recruitment and will be individually approaching specialists, such as psychiatrists, paediatricians, GPs from Sale, pharmacists and respiratory physicians. The committee suggested we seek interest through existing structures, such as the GPHN or the PAIN newsletter.

Action Item: Dr Edwards and Professor Walker to investigate potential additional members for the CRG

7. Community Engagement Session

The Community Engagement Session (CES) was held on the 22 August 2018 at the Morwell RSL Club. It was attended by over 70 people, the largest community engagement session to date. Hosted by Gerard Callinan, the session encouraged locals to ask questions to the researchers.

Three external stakeholders were invited along to join in as well, these being, Jane Anderson, Latrobe Health Advocate; Ian Needham, Executive Officer of Latrobe Health Assembly; Bronwyn from the Victorian Environment Protection Agency (EPA); and Assistant Director Tony Murphy from Emergency Management Victoria (EMV).

The committee noted the importance of the community engagement session, and suggested that the 2019 sessions could focus on the public health messages that are coming from the research findings. As these findings have important public health messages for the wider Latrobe Valley region, it is important that these findings are also communicated to a broader audience outside the immediate Morwell region.

8. Other business

No items were raised.

9. Date for the next meeting

The next meeting will be held 5 December 2018.

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Hazelwood Health Study Clinical Reference Group

Action Items – 2018

15 November 2017	7	<i>Endorsed meeting notes of previous meeting to be uploaded to the HHS website.</i>	SM	✓
15 November 2017	8	<i>Professor Abramson to query whether there have been issues with participants not nominating a GP</i>	MA	✓
15 November 2017	9	<i>Circulate Annual Evaluation form to all members</i>	JW	✓
15 November 2017	10	<i>Arrange through GPHN, LRH and LCHS for CRG membership EOI to be circulated in early 2018</i>	SM	✓
18 April 2018	11	<i>Endorsed meeting notes to be uploaded to the Hazelwood Health Study website</i>	MP	✓
18 April 2018	12	<i>Obtain a list of respiratory specialists and circulate to interested members of the CAC</i>	MP	✓
18 April 2018	13	<i>Consult with CRG members to determine the date for the July meeting</i>	MP	✓
17 October 2018	14	<i>Endorsed meeting notes of previous meeting to be uploaded to the HHS website.</i>	MP	
17 October 2018	15	<i>Circulate preprint reports for the two Psychological Impact stream reports to the committee</i>	MP	
17 October 2018	16	<i>Circulate the 2019 Dissemination of Findings Timetable prior to the next meeting</i>	MP	
17 October 2018	17	<i>Recruitment of committee members</i>	MP	