The Northern Territory Clinical School Newsletter

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NTCS WELCOMES NEW MEDICAL STUDENTS

Twenty four new Northern Territory Clinical School (NTCS) medical students recently completed Orientation week in Darwin. To kick off the orientation week, family, friends and staff members of the NTCS extended a warm Territory welcome to the new students at the Darwin Trailer Boat Club. Later in the week students were also welcomed by Minister of Health Chris Burns at a reception held at Parliament House. Other orientation week activities included sessions on cross cultural training, trauma management, introduction to General Practice, and examination training.

The 2008 group comprises eight students from James Cook University and sixteen students from Flinders University. The student’s full clinical year will encompass clinical and academic study, as well as hands-on experiences such as visiting remote communities, learning in hospitals, and working with Northern Territory General Practitioners.

This year, a group of the Flinders University students will participate for the first time in the newly created Community Based Medical Education program where they will spend half of their year in General Practice and associated health practices. The Clinical School is excited about this new direction which will give the students a wonderful opportunity to participate in medicine at the grass roots level.

Other Flinders students will spend half their year at the Northern Territory Rural Clinical School either in Katherine or Alice Springs. In these sites student learning reflects the local cultural and environmental context of the different communities, their health and wellness, and health care delivery systems. Students enjoy being part of the team and being treated as ‘locals’.

Gillian Paynter, Lila Loveard, Marika Broomfield & Bhavini Patel enjoy the Orientation music.

Jo Skellet, Dusan Sajdak, Sheree Cross and Ben Baldwin

Dr Leone Katekar, Dr Keith Edwards, Dr Simon Morgan, and Brad Palmer of the C-Sides band.

Prof Michael Lowe, Samara Baldwin, Peter Webb, Kirsty Campbell.
FLINDERS AND JCU GRADUATING CLASS 2007

Medical students from the Northern Territory Clinical School were awarded top honours in 2007.

- NTCS Flinders student Jonathan Kaufman shared The John Gladstone Sweeney Prize in Orthopaedics
- The Prize in Paediatrics and the Dean’s Prize won by NTCS Flinders student Levi Morse.
- The Chancellor’s Letter of Commendation and the University Medal won by NTCS students Jonathan Kaufman, Levi Morse and Flinders student Steve Moylan (Steve spent part of his fourth year studies at RDH)

Honours:

Jonathan Kaufman (NTCS Flinders)                    Brett Leavers (NTCS Flinders)
Levi Morse (NTCS Flinders)                  Steven Moylan  (NTCS Flinders)

James Cook University (JCU) student Carmon Gunthorpe, who spent the final two years of her medical degree at NTCS in Darwin, was one of the top James Cook University students graduating in 2007. Carmon has been awarded the Critical and Crisis Care Year 6 Prize and the Tropical Medical Training Prize in Rural Medicine. These prizes are awarded to the most outstanding students in each of the disciplines.

Of the 21 students who spent most of their final two years in the Territory, 9 have returned to the NT for their intern year in 2008. Two students have elected to do their intern year at Alice Springs Hospital, and seven at Royal Darwin Hospital. NTCS would like to wish all the graduating students of 2007 the very best with their future careers and hope they remain or return to work in the Northern Territory.

COMMUNITY BASED MEDICAL EDUCATION (CBME) UPDATE

CBME KICKS OFF IN DARWIN

The new Darwin Community Based Medical Education (CBME) Program commenced in January this year and has hit the ground running.

The program kicked off with an orientation week for the Darwin CBME students and their counterparts in the Rural Clinical Schools of Katherine and Alice Springs. The aim of the week was to highlight the different spheres of influence of the doctor in the community, encompassing the patient, the patient’s family and community, and the broader society. The orientation sessions reflected this aim and covered a range of topics including patient-centred medicine, public health, and training in cross-cultural communication. The highlight of the week was the Medico-Cultural Tour of Darwin which culminated in a welcome reception at Parliament House hosted by the Minister of Health, Dr Chris Burns.

The four CBME students then started their clinical placements in general practices and other community health settings in Darwin. These clinical placements are supported by a regular Monday afternoon case-based teaching session, as well as the existing program of PBLs and other tutorials. In addition, students are capturing information on patient encounters and skills development by completing an electronic logbook and a reflective portfolio. These two new resources have a vital role in teaching and learning, as well as for CBME program evaluation.

One of the core aims of the new CBME program is to provide a greater emphasis on training in Indigenous Health and socioeconomic determinants of health in the Northern Territory. To meet this aim, students will undertake a 2 week placement in the Laynhapuy Homelands of East Arnhem Land under the supervision of the local health team. This placement will be supported by a structured program of cultural training and supervision by NTCS Aboriginal Cultural Advisor, Mr Matthew Turner. The NTCS is most excited to be able to offer students greater community-based experience and teaching in Indigenous Health this year.

Senior Lecturer in General Practice, Simon Morgan
CENTRAL CLINIC, ALICE SPRINGS
Dr Anne Cawley, Senior Lecturer at NTRCS Alice Springs, presented a plaque to Dr Wendy Zerk from Central Clinic and thanked her and her staff for their dedication to the NTRCS students. Dr Anne Cawley acknowledged the enormous effort and time that the clinic puts into the students. Central Clinic in Alice Springs is a popular rotation with students. A plaque will also soon be presented to Congress Clinic in Alice Springs.

ALICE SPRINGS STUDENT UPDATE
Two NT Rural Clinical School students have recently begun their 5 month Year 3 placement in Alice Springs. The students, Jeremy Wells and Emily Carroll, are both third year Flinders University students.

Two Flinders fourth year students are currently based in Alice completing two terms of the newly introduced Rural Selective Package. This package is offered through the Rural Clinical School campuses in Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy. Students are offered the choice of two placements in Alice Springs Hospital to satisfy the 2 Acute Care Selectives (Medicine and Surgery) and two in Nhulunbuy, which satisfy the Rural Selective and Ambulatory Selective requirements. These placements are taken consecutively over 6 months.

The first term for selective and elective students has just ended. Six student went on to their next placements and three will remain in Alice for another term or more. The students had a great time in Alice, although there was a terrible heat wave that felt like it was never going to end. Term two students have arrived and completed a day of Cultural Orientation and ACAP (Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program). The information students receive in these sessions is critical to their placement and experience in Alice Springs.

Caroline Gouws, Student Placement Officer in Alice Springs, has relocated from the CRH building back to the hospital. Caroline is glad to be back in her own space and hospital staff and students appreciate Caroline being close at hand to arrange placements and follow up student matters. She has decorated her office with posters from past Year 4 Flinders students which depict student placements and projects from 2007. The posters are a good focus point for students and hospital staff visiting the office.
Nhulunbuy is a remote, vibrant and welcoming township of 4,000 people on the northeast coast of Arnhem Land and it’s only 15 km from one of the largest Aboriginal communities on the Gove Peninsula. Nhulunbuy is the hub of a number of medical and other services that support eight other major Aboriginal communities, and many more homelands and outstations in the area. For the past 36 years it has been the site of a massive Alcan bauxite mine and refinery that produces 3.8 million tonnes of alumina per year and employs nearly 1,500 people in the area. If you have a passion for remote and Aboriginal health, but still enjoy the comforts and support of living in a town, it’s a great place to be.

As a Flinders student I got a taste for tropical medicine and Indigenous health during my 3rd year at Royal Darwin Hospital. I was keen to get out into the communities and homelands where Country and Culture are strong, yet so is the grip of infectious and chronic disease with a crisis of poverty, overcrowding, and reportedly the lowest rate of Medicare expenditure per capita. Arnhem Land also has a wet season that turns roads into rivers and keeps everything but the mossies away.

The Yolngu people of East Arnhem have a fascinating life, law and language. The complex and sophisticated Yolngu systems of kinship, rights and responsibilities, creation, land and ceremony still permeate everyday life. I’m discovering how people belong to one of two moieties called Dhuwa or Yirritja. I’ve learnt for instance, the morning star, water goanna and stringybark are Dhuwa; while the evening star, stingray and cycad are Yirritja. In the Gove Peninsula and surrounding area, most Yolngu belong to one of sixteen clans, of which eight are Dhuwa and eight are Yirritja. Yolngu Matha is the second most commonly used language in the NT. It’s not easy when there are five different ways of pronouncing the letter n - luckily people are only too helpful to assist in any attempt you have at speaking Yolngu.

Flinders University NT Rural Clinical School spent much time and thought in developing this new six month Rural Stream for fourth year students. As the first student to come to Nhulunbuy under this program, I am blown away by the resources, support, clinical and cultural opportunities that are on offer. My partner and I have fantastic accommodation in a modern tropical style house on the edge of the town lease, with access to a 4WD vehicle, bicycles, internet and computer facilities, a medical and cultural library, and the help of two dedicated (one administrative and one medical) staff and many other willing helpers. We will spend three months here before travelling south to Alice Springs for a further three months, to compare and contrast another remote town and Indigenous health setting. We feel very lucky to have these opportunities even though I am still studying. The aim is to have such a good time as a student that we might plan to come back one day - and it is working!

For my first 6 weeks here I’ve been based at Miwatj Aboriginal Health Centre, where the NT Rural Clinical School Nhulunbuy Office is located. Through this AMS, I am able to do my own consults at the clinic, travel to nearby Marngarr community clinic to do outreach clinics; work with doctors, Aboriginal Health Workers, a nutritionist and participate in the activities of Laynhapuy Health who travel out to homelands to provide both general and special health services including audiometric assessments and midwifery care. (continued next page...)
UPDATE FROM NHULUNBUY CONTINUED....

REPORT FROM YEAR 4 RURAL SELECTIVE STUDENT JACINTA SPRY CONTINUED...

In addition, I spend a few mornings a week at Gove District Hospital doing ward rounds, emergency, working with visiting specialists (psychiatry, gynaecology, surgery, cardiology, you name it), flying out to Ramingining or Milingimbi communities, going on aero medical retrievals, or participating in the public health or clinical work undertaken by the local Centre for Disease Control. Over only 12 weeks, this diverse program has allowed me to see a huge variety of the weird and wonderful conditions unique to tropical life, and also some of the more serious conditions that sadly continue to plague remote and Aboriginal Australians. Serious renal disease in people my age and younger include multiple cardio-embolic strokes in a 32 year old man; Mucormycosis causing frontal lobe abscess and epilepsy; Leprosy; TB; Trachoma; Melioidosis; coral cuts and snake bites. Plus there are all the heroic hunting stories; “I cut my hand spearing turtle”, “I cut my foot with an axe when making yidaki (didgeridoo)”, and “that mangrove root speared my foot when I was hunting stingray”. It’s been a really amazing experience to go with Yolngu families hunting, fishing, walking and gathering bark for painting. They know that land so well. It’s been fascinating to listen to their stories, about the past and their hopes for the future.

Jacinta Spry, 4th Year Rural Selective Student

STAFF PROFILE: DEBBIE MCINTYRE, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, NHULUNBUY

My name is Debbie McIntyre and I’ve recently commenced employment at NTRCS Nhulunbuy. I come from a background in Queensland Health as a Clinical Support Officer. My role there was to ensure the recruitment and retention of Doctors within the Mackay Health Service District. Prior to this I worked for Groote Eylandt Mining Company as a Human Resources Administration Officer and served in the Australian Army for nearly 15 years. My husband is employed by Alcan and I have two teenage children. So far I find Nhulunbuy to be a very friendly town. I have also found the staff of NTRCS most welcoming.

Dr Jenny Brown, Deborah McIntyre & Velda Mazoudier relax and enjoy the Nhulunbuy night after a hard days work

UPDATE FROM KATHERINE CAMPUS

KATHERINE UPDATE

Two NT Rural Clinical School students have recently begun their 6 month Year 3 placement in Katherine. Sheree Cross & Peter Webb are both third year Flinders University students. Peter & Sheree have settled in exceedingly well to the Katherine placement and are enjoying the advantages of living in our small rural town. Fishing has been an outlet for Peter, as Sheree keeps a watchful eye out for the elusive crocodile..... Peter has been placed at Wurla Wurlinjang Clinic & Sheree with Kintore Clinic, with both students also spending time at Katherine Hospital on the wards and with visiting specialists.
We welcome the following new staff to the Northern Territory Clinical School:

- Dr Jenny Presser, GP Registrar
- Richard Sager, Lecturer in Allied Health and Rural and Remote Medicine
- Matthew Turner, Aboriginal Cultural Advisor
- Virginia Comitalo, Administration Assistant, CBME and NTRCS
- Deborah McIntyre, Administration Officer, Nhulunbuy

**SPECIAL NEWS FROM OUR STAFF**

Princess Lila married her Prince Charming, Wayan Putra, in a Hindu Ceremony last July. The wedding took place in Mataram on the island of Lombok, Indonesia. Lila and Wayan now live permanently in Darwin and are expecting a much loved addition to their family in April. Congratulations to you both from the NTCS & NTRCS

Tracey Briscoe and Jeff Mitchell married last December in Alice Springs. Tracey & Jeff’s Grandchildren were part of the Wedding party...so cute in their “Princess Dresses”.

Who looks like Gran then??

**CONTACT DETAILS**

Northern Territory Clinical School
Postal Address: PO Box 41326 Casuarina NT 0811
Ph: 1800 773 180 Email: admin.ntcs@flinders.edu.au
Fax: 08 8922 7928 Website: www.ntmed.flinders.edu.au

Location: Building 4, Level 1 Royal Darwin Hospital Rocklands Drive, Tiwi

**BURNS - ALPER AWARDS FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE, 2007**

A/Prof Peter Morris, Prof Bart Currie and Dr Phil Blum were awarded the Burns - Alpers Awards for Teaching Excellence from Flinders University in 2007. Flinders University students vote for the recipients of this prestigious teaching award each year. Congratulations to the 2007 winners.