

Behavioural Sciences Unit (BSU) update

The BSU was established in 2001 by A/P Richard Cohn. Our core members include: A/P Cohn, Dr Claire Wakefield, Catharine Fleming, Ursula Sansom-Daly, Sarah Ellis, Jordana McLoone and Jennifer Cohen. We look after research studies that cover all the psycho-social aspects of the paediatric cancer journey, from diagnosis to survivorship and bereavement.

Welcome...!

Samra Saikal and Lorraine Cheung: our new students who will complete their Independent Learning Projects with us over the next year. They will be working on the connectivity and neuropsychology studies.



Moving The BSU team is moving to the Lowy Cancer Research Centre at UNSW for 9 months. We will be back at the hospital in 2012. Our mail and phone details will stay the same.



Publications

Our team has recently published 2 papers in the journal, *Pediatric Blood and Cancer*.

Child cancer survivors: Dietary intake after treatment. We found that most children (aged 4-13) who have recently finished their treatment are not overweight. However, many have diets that include too much energy (calories) and not enough calcium, iron and folate.



Information and support needs of young cancer survivors and their families after completing cancer treatment. We found that families need



more information about fertility, family cancer risk and how to "go back to normal" after treatment. Families can feel isolated and lonely after treatment. We are now working to improve services

for families to help them to cope during the difficult times after treatment has finished.

Currently recruiting....

Grandparents study: We are looking for grandparents to participate in a study about their needs and concerns. (contact: Claire Wakefield, c.wakefield@unsw.edu.au, (02) 9382 1731).

'Connectivity' study: This project is looking at the advantages and disadvantages of using videoconferencing technology (e.g. SKYPE™) to connect children with cancer to their home school classroom (contact: Claire Wakefield, c.wakefield@unsw.edu.au, (02) 9382 1731).

Coming soon....

Neuropsychology study: Looking at the implementation of neuropsychology reports for children returning to school after treatment for brain cancers.

Completed Studies.....

Congratulations to our two students from 2010 have finished their projects.

Sleep study- Su Lynn Yoong: Ms Yoong found that parents who slept on the ward reported an average of 5.7 hours of sleep and 5 awakenings per night, which was significantly worse sleep than parents of healthy children. Anxiety and caffeine consumption predicted poor sleep outcomes. Using this information, we are looking at ways to improve parent's sleep experiences on the wards.

Accommodation needs- Gunar Daniel: Most parents reported preferring to stay on campus, near their child. Preferences about accommodation style were mixed, with most parents preferring self-contained or communal accommodation.

Thank you to all the families who participate in our projects, as we couldn't do our work without you!