

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION CENTRE OF SOUTH AFRICA



NEW STAFF IN THE OFFICE

The MHIC, MRC Unit on Anxiety & Stress Disorders, and the Dept of Psychiatry, University of Stellenbosch said formal goodbyes to *Jane Metelo-Liquito* and *Michelle Brand* with a farewell party held in their honour on 18 February. Jane worked at the MHIC for close to 4 years and at her time of leaving filled the post assistant director. During the time that she worked at our Centre she completed an honours in psychology, and 2 art therapy certificates. Jane has gone into fulltime private practice and we wish her the best of luck with this exciting new venture.

Judging by the many changes and new developments of the first quarter, this year promises to be a challenging one. All in the mental health field are concerned by the current coverage of psychiatric disorders by managed healthcare institutions, as well as the impending legislation. Professional and consumer bodies such as SASOP, REACH and the SADAG have been hard at work advocating for psychiatric patients and the mental health field. On the home front, it has been goodbye to some key staff and friends, but hello to new and old faces. Prof Dan Stein is back at the helm of the MRC Unit on Anxiety & Stress Disorders after honing his research skills in the States.



At the farewell party: Prof Robin Emsley (Head: Dept Psychiatry) and Jane Metelo-Liquito

Michelle served as office administrator at the MHIC for more than 2 years, and we will sorely miss her efficient yet strict running of our office and overseeing of all supplies. However, we are very pleased at the wonderful work opportunity she has been offered in Durban.



At the farewell party: Dr Soraya Seedat (MRC Unit on Anxiety & Stress Disorders) and Michelle Brand.

Inside this issue:

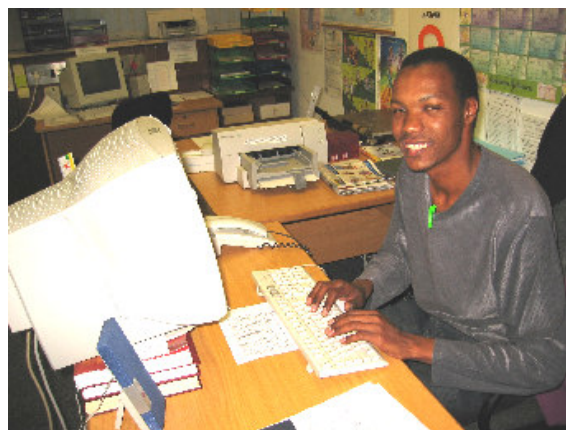
| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| | |
| New staff in the office | 2 |
| Publications | 2 |
| Awareness Campaigns | 3 |
| Educational Activities | 3 |
| Research | 4 |
| Referral and info centre | 4 |

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NEW STAFF IN THE OFFICE CONTINUED

As Prof Emsley mentioned in his address at the farewell party, staff changes bring in new faces and fresh ideas. We are therefore delighted to welcome **Johnny Daniels** and **Winnie de Roover** into the MHIC stable. Johnny is no stranger to the MHIC call centre. He has helped out on a volunteer basis with many of our educational and awareness campaigns over the past 3 years. Johnny has taken over Michelle's role as office manager, although he continues to work closely with the OCD Genetics Research Project of the MRC Unit.



Johnny Daniels

Winnie de Roover has enthusiastically and energetically taken over Jane's role and is working as MHIC office manager. She is responsible for liaising with the industry, supervising and training students, and helping with the general running of many of the MHIC's psychoeducational tasks and projects. She continues to work with the Bathuthuzele Youth Stress Clinic and other research projects of the MRC Unit. Winnie qualified as a clinical psychologist at Gent University, Belgium, and also completed a Master's degree in research psychology at the University of Cape Town. With her many mental health interests and talents we are sure she will be an asset to our Centre.



Winnie de Roover

PUBLICATIONS

- The 5th edition of the patient guide ***False Alarm! How to Conquer the Anxiety Disorders***, is being printed and will be randomly distributed with the South Africa Medical Journal. Please contact us about orders or if you want more information on this easy to read patient guide. The new version includes a chapter on Insomnia, a condition often associated with the anxiety disorders and their comorbidities.
- Updating of the 7th edition of the prescribing guide ***Psychiat-***

ric Medications in Primary Care: Algorithms and Guidelines, has started. Thanks to



Prof. Dan Stein and the other contributing authors. We're applying for CDP accreditation

again and are planning to distribute the book with a SAMA journal.

- Gathering information and editing the 8th edition of the ***Mental Health Resource Guide of Southern Africa*** is also going well and we should reach deadline with comfort. Thanks to Annerine Roos and Johnny Daniels who are tirelessly helping with the updating.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

International Brain Awareness Week:

15 to 21 March 2004. We are pleased to announce that this year's BAW went extremely well.

- The campaign was launched with a **media tea** at the Two Oceans Aquarium. The morning's proceedings included a keynote address by Prof Mark Solms of UCT, and a sharing of personal experiences by Karen Borochowitz (Alzheimer's SA) and Deon Roos (Brain Injury Group), followed by a sociable tea in the Cape Town sun. The media launch was well received leading excellent radio, newspaper, popular magazine, newsletter and Internet exposure; even primetime television news!
- A national BAW **poster and logo competition** was run to create awareness amongst learners. Rotmotse Primary School in the Rustenburg-area was the winner of the school category, while individual



Media exposure Deon Roos and Dr Frans Hugo doing a radio interview at the Radio Sonder Grense studio in Sea Point.

and group winners in three age categories each walked off with R200.00 for their creative and educational entries.

- A full programme of **educational talks** addressed lay and professional groups on various brain-related topics. These included a CPD lecture for GP's, a workshop for retirement home professionals, an open day at Panorama hospital and school talks.
- Live discussion groups and in-

teractive self-screenings were hosted on the **Internet**, and an educational video played on **big screens** at Canal Walk.



Public talks Ruth Jarvis of SANS/UCT demonstrating the effects of substance abuse on the brain to a group at the St Michael's Home for Girls

A huge **thank you** to all BAW participants, partners and **supporters**, especially CWTV Canal Walk; the Dean's Office, Health Sciences Faculty, University of Stellenbosch; the Dept. of Health: Mental Health Programme; EDAB; Exclusive Books; Health24; Janssen-Cilag; Lundbeck; Novartis; and Panorama Medi-Clinic.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- **CPD activities:** In collaboration with the Dept of Health, the MHIC has initiated a programme of CPD activities for *primary healthcare workers*. This includes 10 sessions covering topics such as diagnosing and managing depression, an overview of the anxiety disorders, dementia care, and managing the aggressive patient. Clinicians of the Dept of Psychiatry, University of Stellenbosch, give these lectures. Attaining all-important ethics points is made easier with a lecture on informed consent and patient competency in practice.
- **Medical students:** We are fortunate to be allocated 12 slots in the late rotation of the MBChB VI students at the University of Stellenbosch. These lectures are

used to provide information on mental health information resources as well as to provide an overview of the anxiety disorders.

- **Lay presentations:** The MHIC continues a series of educational talks to *Old Mutual staff* that was initiated in 2003. The programme includes lectures on managing depression and anxiety, substance abuse and memory problems.
- **Dept of Family Medicine and Primary Care:** The Algorithm book is again considered prescribed material for the Mental Disorders in Primary Care long-distance course and we continue to manage queries on the web-hosted Expert Bulletin Board.
- **Website:** Johnny has been hard

at work keeping the content of our website current and interesting. Go to www.mentalhealthsa.co.za for more information on our professional, consumer and research activities.

- **Nursing students:** Final-year nursing students of the University of Stellenbosch continue to rotate through the MHIC Call Centre as part of their curriculum in *community psychiatry*. Here they are taught and given practical experience in psychoeducation. Further, Winnie leads a *support group session* for post-basic psychiatric nurses from across the country enrolled at Stellenbosch University to further their nursing knowledge and skills.

MRC Research Unit on Anxiety and Stress Disorders:

The Unit held a Bosberaad early April to strategise research focus and activities for the year. Prof Brian Harvey of Potchefstroom University and Dr Jurgen Seier of the MRC Primate Unit were some of the special participants at this brainstorming session. The Unit will have a strong emphasis on basic science research in the foreseeable future, including animals modelling, brain imaging and international collaborative studies. Ongoing and new studies of the Unit include:

- A placebo-controlled study of somatisation disorders at a primary healthcare level.
- Evaluation and pharmacotherapy treatment of youths exposed to trauma leading to PTSD.
- Recruitment of normal controls and patients with anxiety disorders for the genetics research project.
- Investigation of animal models for various anxiety disorders.
- Evaluating the impact of a CPD programme on the mental health knowledge of primary healthcare workers. This study is being conducted in collaboration with the Dept of Nursing, University of Stellenbosch.

The first term of this year ended with great news. Our Head of Dept, Prof Robin Emsley, awarded the *Lundbeck Community Award* to the MHIC. This will be used to attend to some vital computer upgrades and information resources.

We continue to provide *telephonic, electronic and mail information* to health professionals, students, the general public and the media. Jenny Roos provides invaluable volunteer assistance in the Centre, while Annerine Roos (no relation) offers much needed assistance on an ad hoc basis. Last, but certainly not least, congratulations to Annerine who will be receiving a Master's degree at Stellenbosch University's April graduation ceremony!

MHIC

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