



AUSTRALIAN INJURY PREVENTION NETWORK

INCORPORATED IN VICTORIA

ABN 23 676 617 704

[2009 AIPN Student Meeting – Held at Melbourne Injury Prevention Conference](#)

A slightly different format was decided for the student meeting at the 2009 AIPN Injury Prevention Conference. A careers forum was held, for the first time, at this meeting to give students an idea of potential career paths for injury prevention

Theme: Injury Prevention Career– How Do We Get There?

The purpose was to give prospective and current students the opportunity to listen and discuss available options for gaining a successful career in injury prevention, safety promotion, or other public health related role. The focus was on the possible avenues for gaining a position after study, including academic, industry, government and international options.

The meeting consisted of injury centre representatives from the main injury centre's around Australia. Panel members were those that had either recently completed a PhD or had gained an injury or safety related position after study. The final group of presenters were from international injury centres. The meeting was mediated and coordinated by Dr. Lesley Day, who ensured that it ran smoothly and helped to facilitate questions from the students.

Injury Centre Representatives: mainly gave a brief outline of their research centre and its higher degree research (HDR) program. Each representative included some information on gaining a post-doctoral position at their centre or suggested other possible options for students wanting to gain a post-doctoral position. The injury centre representatives included:

1. Professor Joan Ozanne-Smith - Department of Forensic Medicine - Monash University – VIC.
2. Professor Rod McClure - Monash University Accident Research Centre – VIC.
3. A/Prof Rebecca Ivers - George Institute for International Health – NSW.
4. Professor Ann Williamson - University of New South Wales – NSW.
5. Dr. Jenny Blitvich - University of Ballarat – VIC.
6. A/Prof James Harrison – Research Centre for Injury Studies - Flinders University – SA.
7. Professor Narelle Haworth & Dr Alexia Lennon - CARRS-Q – QUT – QLD.
8. Dr. Belinda Gabbe – Dept. of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine - Monash University – VIC.

Panel Members: mainly focused on their own career path into their area of work. Each of the panel members included their experiences and any advice on gaining a post doctoral position or other research position after completion their studies. Some information on advocacy and gaining experience in advocacy was also mentioned. The panel members included:

1. Dr. Rebecca Mitchell - Research Fellow - University of NSW.
2. Dr. Kirsten McKenzie - Research Fellow - National Centre for Classification in Health – QLD.
3. Dr. Bernadette Matthews – Manager - Research and Health Promotion – Life Saving Victoria.
4. Dr. Rebbecca Lilley – Early Career researcher - Injury Prevention research Unit – New Zealand.
5. Dr. Lisa Buckley – Post-Doctoral Fellow - CARRS-Q – QUT – QLD.
6. Ms Debbie Scott - Manager – Queensland Injury Surveillance unit – QLD.
7. Ms Aleks Natora – Project Manager – DHS – VIC.
8. Dr. Sophie Pointer – Assistant director - Research Centre for Injury Studies – SA.

International Delegates: provided a perspective from an international point of view. They each explained their research centre and the current PhD program. Any available opportunities that may be available for Australian students were also mentioned.

1. Professor Gordon Smith - Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine - University of Maryland, USA.
2. Professor Lois Fingerhut – Consultant - Injury Epidemiology – USA.
3. Shanthi Ameratunga – Otago University - New Zealand.

Feedback:

Positive feedback was received from several students who attended the meeting and overall the meeting ran smoothly. The students heard from a variety of injury, safety and policy researchers about the steps involved in gaining a successful career in the area. Some of the helpful tips for PhD students included:

- Having good mentors.
- Having a good workplace environment that supports its students.
- Becoming part of a research group within the research centre.
- Discussing options with your supervisor/s.
- Accepting casual, part-time or even full-time RA positions during or after the PhD as a first step.
- Becoming a member on a relevant committee.
- Approaching and networking with appropriate people at conferences.
- Being or putting yourself in the right place at the right time (not always possible to plan).
- Talking to senior researchers and letting them know you're interested in working with them.
- Keeping an eye out for grants that you may be able to write or put your name on with other researchers.
- Looking for a range of grants including short-term ones.
- Looking further afield and not only sticking to academia.
- Learning or improving your advocacy skills.
- Working out where your passion is and speaking to as many people in that area as you can.