

Iodine deficiency in Victoria

Dr Ciara McDonnell, Mark Harris and Margaret Zacharin's important study showing that Victorian children have an unacceptably high prevalence of iodine deficiency, was recently published in the Medical Journal of Australia, attracting widespread publicity in the AGE, The Australian, the Herald-Sun, and on radio and television. They showed that many children at Melbourne city schools are deficient in iodine, potentially giving them goitres, or enlarged thyroid glands and thyroid hormone deficiency. Thyroid hormone is essential for normal growth and brain development and maintenance of many body functions. The reasons for the recurrence of this old problem include use of less salt due to fear of high blood pressure; but even the salt used is now mostly non-iodised. Diets are generally low in iodine, including bread, which also used to be supplemented with iodine. These findings have important implications for public health measures.



Dr Ciara McDonnell, Dr Margaret Zacharin, Dr Clarissa Carvalho

Congratulations

Dr Kirsty Reed,
 Dr Georgina Giannakis,
 Dr Heather Gilbertson
on the completion of their PhD's
 To the Sinclair Laboratory -
for setting a record of five babies
born in a six month period. The
 Centre has celebrated the birth of eight
 babies during this time.

New Faces

Welcome to our Development Board:
Adrian King, Mandy Yencken, Philippa Finney and Debbie Thomas

Dermal Therapeutics

2002 was an exciting year for our Dermal Therapeutics team, with the commencement of a commercial R&D agreement with Australian biopharmaceuticals company, Antisense Therapeutics Ltd (ATL). ATL has world-wide exclusive rights to the team's cutaneous antisense technology patents and will develop the technology for clinical testing.

The Dermal Therapeutics team, lead by Dr Christopher Wraight, has spent several years working on a new type of treatment for the common skin disorder psoriasis. "ATL's investment in our research has provided the backing required to accelerate the development of the psoriasis therapy and has also

enabled us to expand our proprietary technology to include other types of skin disorders", said Dr Wraight.

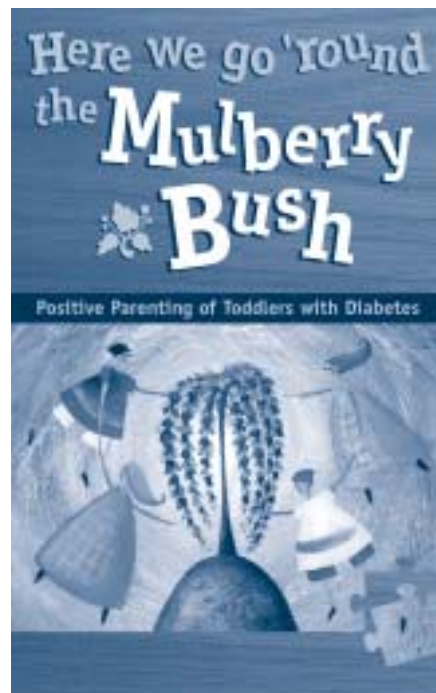
With the help of ATL's technology partner, Isis Pharmaceuticals, the world leaders in antisense technology, Dermal Therapeutics researchers have already selected a lead compound for clinical testing in patients. Over the past six months around fifty psoriasis patients have donated samples of their psoriatic skin to assist the researchers with the development work.

If you have psoriasis and would like to volunteer for a skin biopsy or if you would like more information, please contact our program co-ordinator, Anna Kilgour on 9345 7909.

Toddler video launched

The Minister, the Honourable John Thwaites, launched "Here we go around the Mulberry Bush" a video focusing on positive parenting of Toddlers with Diabetes on World Diabetes Day - 14th November 2002. The Sony Foundation Australia proudly supported the development of the video. This video is the second in a series being developed by the Department of Endocrinology and Diabetes. The first, "Keep Your Life On-line", won international awards in the USA. Dr Fergus Cameron, together with our diabetes education staff, parents and toddlers and "former" toddlers, all contributed to the video, which was again produced by Joanna Griggs of the hospital's Educational Resource Centre.

Inquiries: Please contact Joanne (03) 9345 5951. Cost: \$33.00 for patients registered with NDSS and \$99.00 for organisations, institutions and schools.



Farewell It is with regret that we acknowledge the resignation of Development Board Members, Julia Fraser and Henry Rekaris. Thank you for your tremendous support and encouragement.

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Minister for Education, Science and Training, Brendan Nelson, announced a total of \$80 million in funding for the eight new national CoE's recently as part of the Government's Backing Australia's Ability innovation package. Many of these CoE's were in high energy physics, mathematics and IT. Only one national centre was awarded in biomedical research. Selection was by rigorous international peer review with the short-list being interviewed by a panel of international experts.

Professor Andrew Sinclair led a successful consortium in

Biotechnology and Development that was awarded \$10 million over five years. This multi-disciplinary research team (drawn from four Universities) will focus on how undifferentiated stem cells in the testis develop into mature sperm. Understanding this complex developmental process will impact on testicular cancer, male infertility, new approaches to contraception, effect of environmental insults on sperm and large-scale gene pharming for the production of drugs. International health bodies such as the World Health Organisation and Pharmaceutical companies are partners and keenly await the outcomes of this research.



Sinclair research team

Party at BMW Edge

(Featuring Ross Stevenson, Bernadette Robinson, Batacouta)

Support Cutting Edge Research at the Centre for Hormone Research "Party at the BMW Edge", including entertainment and auction, at Federation Square - Saturday, May 3, 2003, at 7.00 pm - Tickets \$125.00 per person Enquiries: Prue Lewis, Telephone (03) 9509 5222 or email: pruelewis@optushome.com.au

Movies:

Thank you to the dedicated efforts of Alan and Philippa Finney, together with the generous donations of Buena Vista International and Village Cinemas. These movie events raised over \$10,000 towards our research.

The Quiet American

An evening of cocktails, sponsored by Sero Australia, and film was enjoyed by over 100 people on Monday, 18 November, at the Rivoli Cinema.

The Hours - Preview

A special preview of "the Hours", screened to a full house, on Monday, 17th February, 2002. An entertaining night was enjoyed by all.

Proudly supported by



This newsletter aims to keep you informed of the activities of the Centre.

