



Newsletter of 'Using our Brains' Donor Program Issue 21 December 2008

From the Director:



The most recent significant change in UoB staff is that our long-time Clinical Manager, Therese Garrick, has resigned. Therese began working with the NSW Tissue Resource Centre in 1994, supported by the NHMRC (Federal Government grant) with their program to improve research into Mental Health Disorders. She was responsible for all of the cases with a psychiatric background.

When 'Using our Brains' was launched in 2002 she took on a more managerial role and has been responsible for the excellent outcomes of this program. I think that many of you will have spoken to her on the phone or met her at some of her presentations with Rotary, Apex, Lions Clubs and various other societies. She has been a passionate supporter of the program and we will miss her contributions very much.

During the 14 years with us she completed her Master of Science Degree in Medicine and has been involved in 23 publications in national and international journals. Many of the manuscripts dealt with you, our donors. Questionnaires were sent to many of you asking about your motivation to join the program. You might be interested, but not surprised, to know that people of all age groups are interested in brain donation for research. In addition, 81% of our UoB donors have pledged to donate other organs and tissues for transplantation. The most commonly cited reasons for being involved in brain donation were to benefit science (27.6%), to benefit medicine (23.9%), a family illness (17.5%) and to benefit the community (16.6%).

Therese worked closely with other UoB staff who share her passion for the program. She intends to keep in touch with her colleagues and friends at UoB and I am sure that she will want to receive these Newsletters so that she can follow the successes and positive outcomes of the program.

We all wish her well in her future endeavours.
Clive Harper

Therese has played an incredibly vital role in the launch and administration of 'Using our Brains'. She has been the face of UoB. Her enthusiasm and commitment to the program has been legendary. Everyone associated with UoB would like to acknowledge Therese's special contributions over the years. A heart-felt thank you, Therese. We all wish you every success in the future.

Your UoB colleagues

Who's Who:

Vivienne Harris, Clinical Liaison Supervisor



My name is Vivienne Harris and I recently joined the staff of 'Using our Brains' filling Therese's role of Clinical Research Nurse following her resignation. It's a big job to attempt to fill the shoes of Therese however I will do my best. If I can manage even half her energy and dedication I'll be doing well!

My background is in nursing, predominantly mental health although I did complete my general training before specializing in the field of psychiatry. I went on to complete a Graduate Diploma in Mental Health (Young Persons) and recently completed a Masters of Mental Health (Adult).

Clearly I have an interest in mental health issues, until now I have worked in the clinical field, assisting individuals to manage mental health disorders. It makes a huge change for me to be dealing with these issues from a research perspective. I am finding it refreshing, interesting and challenging.

On a personal note I have recently relocated to Sydney from Canberra with my husband and our two daughters. We are settling in well and enjoying the sunshine of Sydney after shivering through many freezing winters in the nation's capital.

Next time you ring the office I may answer the phone so you will have a bit of an idea with whom you are speaking. Here's looking forward to having a chat.
Cheers!

Vivienne

What is a standard drink?

Research into alcohol consumption has highlighted the difficulties in determining a standard drink. The following provides you with examples of what constitutes a standard drink in Australia and offers guidelines for low risk drinking. We hope you find this information useful over the festive season and beyond.

One standard drink contains 10 grams of alcohol and is equal to:

- 100ml wine** (12% alcohol)
- 250ml beer** (full strength 4.9% alcohol)
- 30ml spirits** (40% alcohol)
- 60ml port/sherry** (20% alcohol)

Contrast these amounts with the average serve of alcohol.



Source: www.alcohol.gov.au

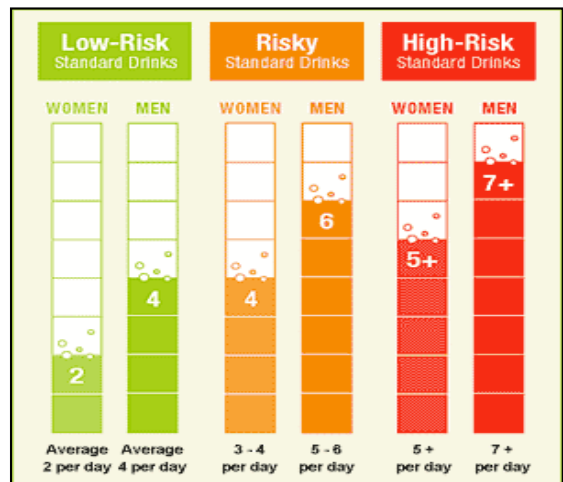
Low risk drinking:

For women	For men
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ An average of no more than 2 standard drinks per day ♣ No more than 4 standard drinks on any one day ♣ 1-2 alcohol free days per week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ An average of no more than 4 standard drinks per day ♣ No more than 6 standard drinks on any one day ♣ 1-2 alcohol free days per week

Binge drinking:

Binge drinking involves drinking above the low risk guidelines on any occasion. When 7+ drinks/day (men) or 5+ drinks/day (women) are consumed, both short term risks (sleep, cardiovascular/circulatory, injury-falls/assault) and long term risks (brain/liver/pancreas, psychological) increase, and the risk increases with each occasion. These risks are exacerbated in young people as the brain doesn't fully develop until the age of 25 years, leading to permanent damage to brain functioning from excessive consumption. Older people should also consider drinking below these guidelines. As we age, the amount of water in our body decreases, so we react

to alcohol more quickly, producing a higher blood alcohol concentration. There is also a greater risk of falls and negative effects from interactions with medications.



Source: www.therightmix.gov.au

So, if you are drinking:

- Set limits for yourself, and don't be pressured into drinking more than you want to.
- Check the can or bottle which will state the number of standard drinks in the container.
- Be careful when drinking in restaurants or bars, e.g. an average serve of wine can vary from 120ml-180ml.
- Alternate alcoholic drinks with water or a non-alcoholic drink.
- Take sips, not gulps and eat both before and with alcohol
- Have at least two alcohol-free days each week.
- If you have a chronic illness or take medication consider drinking below these guidelines or not at all.
- Talk to your GP if you think you have a problem with alcohol.

Robyn Miller



We all get heavier as we get older because there's a lot more information in our heads. So I'm not fat, I'm just really intelligent and my head couldn't hold any more so it started filling up the rest of me!

That's my story and I'm sticking to it!