



UNIVERSITY
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Psychobabble

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• A Year in Review •••••

Welcome to the latest edition of *Psychobabble*. As the academic year comes to an end, it seems appropriate to reflect on what we have accomplished. In 2006, our staff and students enjoyed many and varied accomplishments. Therefore, we have dedicated this newsletter to acknowledge the achievements that not only reflect positively on the Department of Psychology but also on the University as a whole.

One newsletter would not be sufficient to highlight everything that happened in 2006, so we are only providing a brief overview of our accomplishments. For staff, we have included Scholarship (new research grants received, major positions on journals, fellow status, and awards), Teaching (awards), and Service (awards, major positions on granting councils, external assessors, or conference coordinators). In addition to items listed here, many of our faculty have multi-year grants that they received in a previous year as well as travel funding, publications, and conference presentations in 2006. For our graduate students, we have also included Scholarship (scholarships, fellowships, and research certificates/awards/prizes), Teaching (awards), and Service (major positions). In addition, we have included a summary of the Conferences (local, national, and international) that they presented at. As you will see, our students have had the opportunity to travel as far away as Greece and Australia! Hereto, in addition to the items listed, many of our students have multi-year scholarships or fellowships they received in

a previous year as well as travel funding and numerous publications in 2006.

Our standard features have also been included in this newsletter. In this edition, we include the departmental research programmes of Drs. Judy Chipperfield (Developmental Psychology) and Murray Singer (Brain and Cognitive Sciences). Our distinguished graduate is Dr. Angela Coelho, who is now working as a Professor and Vice-Coordinator of the Masters Program in Psychology at the Universidade Catolica Dom Bosco, Campo Grande, MS, Brazil. Finally, we highlight the graduate student research of Launa Leboe (Brain and Cognitive Sciences) and Stephanie Sinclair (Clinical Psychology). The Public Relations Committee hopes that you enjoy this issue of *Psychobabble*. We also extend our congratulations to all members of the Department for their many achievements throughout 2006.

Marian Morry
*Chair, Public Relations
Committee*

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One University. Many Futures.

• Spotlight on Research •••••



Judy Chipperfield

Developmental Programme

Compared to previous generations, many more of us will become centenarians, underscoring the need to explore the journey to healthy, successful aging. Perceptions of personal control, regarded as a cornerstone of successful aging, become especially critical when we face deteriorating physical function or traumatic health crises, such as a heart attack or hip fracture. As a gerontological health psychologist and Director of the *Laboratory for Aging and Health Research*, I am studying the role of perceived personal control and the corresponding belief systems and strategies as they relate to emotional and physical well being in late life.

I draw on interviews conducted with participants from the *Aging in Manitoba Project*, one of the largest ($n \approx 9,000$) and longest (35 year) existing studies of aging. These interview data are linked to objective physical activity measures (accelerometers) and provincial and national records that document mortality and health-care contacts.

Results from my research show that believing outcomes are controllable predicts shorter hospital stay as well as fewer ambulatory physician's visits and laboratory tests. These beliefs even predict survival. In an early study, I showed that adults were most likely to be alive after 12 years if they believed they could exert control over the management of their health care.

Although controllable beliefs can be protective, I argue that they can become dysfunctional if they foster proactive efforts that result in repeated failure. In such instances that often prevail in later life, the negative effects of failure can be offset by adopting a compensatory belief orientation, for example, by adjusting personal expectations or positively reappraising outcomes to "see the silver lining".

I examine these proactive and compensatory orientations that are distinguished in the research literature as primary and secondary control strategies and are captured in Niebuhr's Serenity Prayer.

"Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference"

My findings indicate that these strategies are used differently by men and women and that they vary in their consequences. Women use a more diverse mix that includes both primary and secondary control strategies; whereas, men tend to adopt a more undifferentiated approach involving the sole use of primary control strategies.

The most frequently adopted of all secondary control strategies, an optimistic comparison of oneself to "worse off" others, appears to be especially protective. This strategy that involves, for example, viewing one's heart attack as less serious than a

neighbour's Alzheimer's disease, may be most protective for women. It predicts fewer hospitalizations and shorter hospital stays, translating into large costs savings.

By studying how belief systems sustain health and longevity, my findings have implications for emotional and physical well-being in later life and for the escalating health care costs.

Selected Publications:

Chipperfield, J. G., Perry, R. P., Bailis, D. S., Chuchmach, L. P., & Ruthig, J. C. (2007). Gender differences in use of primary and secondary-control strategies in older adults with major health problems. *Psychology and Health*, 22, 83-105.

Chipperfield, J. G., & Perry, R. P. (2006). Primary- and secondary-control strategies in later life: Predicting hospital outcomes in men and women. *Health Psychology*, 25, 226-236.

Chipperfield, J. G., Perry, R. P., & Weiner, B. (2003). Discrete emotions in later life. *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, 58B, 23-34.



• Our Distinguished Alumni •



Dr. Angela E. L. Coêlho

Vice-Coordinator of the Masters Program in Psychology – Universidade Catolica Dom Bosco (UCDB), Campo Grande, MS, Brazil

I completed my B.A. and M.A. in Psychology at the Universidade Federal da Paraíba, João Pessoa, PB, Brazil. During my M.A., my area of interest was Health Psychology and my research focus was on knowledge, attitudes and risk perception regarding HIV/AIDS. In 1993, I was awarded a Ph.D. scholarship by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to study at the University of Manitoba, at the Department of Psychology and the Disaster Research Institute (DRI). Initially, my advisor was Dr. Jane Moccilin. After she moved to Geneva, Dr. John Adair became my advisor. My research was on the psychosocial responses to slow onset disaster such as drought in the Northeastern area in Brazil. After I completed my doctoral degree in 1999, Dr. Adair invited me to stay for my postdoctoral degree.

Upon completing my degree in December 2000, I returned to Brazil to work at the Universidade Católica Dom Bosco (UCDB). I am a full time professor at the university, teaching undergraduate and graduate level

courses. In Brazil, the undergraduate level program takes five years. At the undergraduate level I teach Health Psychology and I am an internship supervisor to the students who are interested in working with health promotion within the public health system. At the graduate level, I am the vice-coordinator of the Masters Program in Psychology. My research focuses are on Health Psychology and the development of Psychology as a discipline in Brazil. My undergraduate students have received fellowships from the National Research Council (Conselho Nacional de Pesquisa).

I am also an elected member of the Scientific Committee at the university, an active member of several professional societies, and an ad hoc reviewer for journals. I am currently involved in a project for the Federal Council of Psychology and the Brazilian Association for the Teaching of Psychology to develop a Distant Education Course on the practice of psychologists on emergencies and disasters situations. I am also a consultant for the Federal Council of Psychology on issues regarding emergencies and disasters. It has been a challenging job.

As part of my commitment to health promotion, I have been involved with different non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with HIV/AIDS. One of them deals with children living with HIV/AIDS. This institution, The Associação de Apoio a Portadores de AIDS Esperança no Senhor (AAPAES) received the Gates Global Health 2003 Award, donated by the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation, in recognition of the excellent work developed in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil, in caring for children living with HIV/AIDS.

Selected Publications:

Spink, M. J. P., Menegon, V. S. M., Bernardes, J., & Coelho, A. E. L. (in press). The language of risk in psychology: A social constructionist analysis of a psychological database. *Revista: Interamerican Journal of Psychology*.

Menegon, V. S. M., & Coêlho, A. E. L. (in press). Psicologia e sua inserção no sistema público de saúde: um painel longitudinal de temas-foco publicados em periódicos brasileiros. In M. J. P. Spink (Ed.), *A psicologia em diálogo com o SUS: prática profissional e produção acadêmica*. São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.

Reis, R. M. A., Faria, M. R. G. V., Coêlho, A. E. L., & Torres, A. R. R. (2004). Adolescentes: o que eles pensam sobre a AIDS? *Estudos Goiânia*, 31, 1087-1104.

Coêlho, A. E. L., Adair, J. G., & Moccilin, J. S. P. (2004). Psychological responses to drought in Northeastern Brazil. *Revista Interamericana de Psicologia*, 38, 95-103. (Awarded the best article published in the journal in 2004, received the Salazar Award)

Adair, J. G., Coêlho, A. E. L., & Luna, J. R. (2002). How international is psychology? *The International Journal of Psychology*, 37, 160-170.

An Invitation to our Alumni

A lot of new things are happening in the Department and we would like to keep you abreast of these events. With our newsletter, we are attempting to reach all of our alumni, firstly, to bring you up-to-date information on what's new in the Department, and secondly, to ask if you can support one or more of the scholarship, lecture, and colloquium funds that we have established. We would also like to hear about what you have been doing since graduating with a degree in psychology from the University of Manitoba. Let us know what position you currently hold, tell us about your family, etc. We would like to share this information with staff and students and other former alumni, through features such as those in this issue. In short, let's hear from you!

I would like to make a contribution to one or more of the following:

Psychology Graduate Fellowship Fund

To provide support to incoming graduate students.

John P. Zubek Memorial Lecture

The Department of Psychology maintains an endowment fund to support the annual Dr. John P. Zubek Memorial Lecture. A distinguished psychological researcher is invited to deliver this lecture each year. In addition to honouring the memory of Dr. Zubek, this lecture enriches the education of students and provides an opportunity for faculty members to meet and discuss common research interests with a distinguished scholar.

John G. Adair International Distinguished Lectureship

Established on the retirement of John Adair, Professor Emeritus of the department, with the specific purpose of bringing a distinguished psychologist from outside North America to the department every second year.

Psychology Alumni Faculty Scholarship

Awarded to a student newly admitted to the graduate program, awarded to the student with the highest GPA as calculated for admission purposes

Alumni Clinical Psychology Student Research Award

Awarded each year to a graduate student in the Clinical Psychology Training Program on the basis of scholarly and scientific achievements.

Shannon L. Hamm Memorial Scholarship

Awarded to first year graduate students in psychology to study the experimental analysis of behaviour modification at The University of Manitoba.

Colloquium Speakers Series

Department lecture series featuring scholars from within the Department, University, and around the world.

The Vineberg Prize for Excellence in Graduate Student Research

The W. N. Ten Have Award for Best Honours Thesis

For general inquiries about supporting research at the University of Manitoba, please contact:

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Department of Development
179 Extended Education Complex
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2
Phone: (204) 474-9195
Toll-free: 1-800-330-8066
Fax: (204) 474-7635

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