

MEDIA RELEASE

Dated 28 March 2007

For immediate release



TURNING EVIDENCE INTO ACTION

Filling gaps in osteoporosis: WA clinician awarded prestigious national Fellowship

Reducing further fractures in women with osteoporosis is the goal of Dr Charles Inderjeeth, a geriatrician and rheumatologist with the Department of Rehabilitation and Aged Care at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in Nedlands, who has just received a Fellowship co-sponsored by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and the National Institute of Clinical Studies (NICS).

Dr Inderjeeth will use the NICS-DVA Fellowship to undertake a two-year implementation project that aims to improve the way osteoporosis is identified and treated to prevent future fractures.

"In people over the age of 60, one in two women and one in three men will have a fracture due to osteoporosis. While the fractures receive adequate treatment from GPs or hospital emergency departments, osteoporosis is often the underlying cause, particularly in older people with a history of fracture. When this is not addressed, it adds to the risk of further fractures," said Dr Inderjeeth.

"Osteoporosis affects over 2 million Australians and can result in death or a significantly reduced quality of life. It is vital that we increase awareness amongst at risk people and medical practitioners and improve identification and treatment," he added.

"As Australia's national agency for closing gaps in health care, NICS is delighted to award this Fellowship to Dr Inderjeeth, and we are very grateful to the Department of Veterans' Affairs for their generous support," said Dr Heather Buchan, NICS Chief Executive Officer. "The work that Dr Inderjeeth will undertake through his Fellowship will fill an important gap between the best available evidence and current practice in osteoporosis."

According to Dr Inderjeeth, the best available evidence shows that there are three main reasons why we need to be able to identify and treat osteoporosis and falls in this risk group. "They are at increased risk of further fractures, there are effective treatments that we can use to reduce the risk of future fractures and the most cost-effective use of resources is to intervene in those with pre-existing fracture," he explained.

“Through my project I hope to improve awareness of the importance of identifying and managing the risk of future osteoporotic fractures in people presenting to an emergency department or who are hospitalised with fracture, both among medical practitioners and patients who are at risk. This is a very important evidence-practice gap we can fill.”

Dr Inderjeeth will join five other health professionals from Victoria, the Northern Territory and Tasmania in the NICS Fellowship program for 2007.

Release ends.

Interviews: Meredith Cameron, T: 03 88660409 M: 0409 383 152
mcameron@nicssl.com.au

For more information about the NICS Fellowship Program: www.nicssl.com.au

Note to editors

The National Institute of Clinical Studies (NICS), www.nicssl.com.au, is Australia’s national agency for improving health care by helping close important gaps between best available evidence and current clinical practice. NICS is funded by the Australian Government. NICS will become an institute of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) on 1 April 2007. As part of NICS’ transfer to the NHMRC, the Commonwealth, as the member of NICS, has appointed a liquidator under the members’ voluntary winding up provisions of the Corporations Act. This is the mechanism used to wind up a company that is able to pay its debts and meet its commitments. During the transfer, NICS’ business operations will continue as normal.

The NICS Fellowship program, which was launched in 2003, directly contributes to closing evidence-practice gaps by supporting health professionals to undertake practical projects that aim to improve health outcomes for people by getting high quality evidence into everyday clinical practice in particular health settings.

The two-year, part-time Fellowships are open to early- to mid-career health professionals across the health care spectrum, including doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, paramedics, health care managers, and policy makers.

The Fellowships provide an annual stipend as well as professional development opportunities, training programs in evidence implementation, mentorship, and opportunities to network with and learn from world-class experts who come to Australia as part of NICS’ Visiting Experts program.

Applications for NICS Fellowships 2008 open at the end of April 2007.

The Department of Veteran Affairs

The Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) supports those who serve or have served in defence of our nation and commemorates their service and sacrifice. DVA does this by providing compensation and income support entitlements, delivering health care and rehabilitation services, and fulfilling Australia’s commitment to remember and honour those who serve our nation.

www.dva.gov.au