

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release



TURNING EVIDENCE INTO ACTION

Filling gaps in pain management in emergency care: Melbourne paramedic awarded prestigious national Fellowship

Improving the assessment and management of acute pain by ambulance services is the goal of Mr Terry Marshall, Clinical Support Officer at Melbourne's Metropolitan Ambulance Service, who has just received a Fellowship co-sponsored by the Victorian Trauma Foundation (VTF) and the National Institute of Clinical Studies (NICS).

Mr Marshall will use the NICS-VTF Fellowship to undertake a two-year implementation project that aims to address the gap between evidence relating to the most effective therapies for the assessment and relief of pain after traumatic injury and current practice.

During 2006, the Metropolitan Ambulance Service responded to over 10,000 cases that were of a traumatic nature. Despite all available treatment being administered, a percentage of these patients arrived at hospital with persistent significant pain as a result of their trauma.

"There are important reasons to treat pain quickly," said Mr Marshall. "They include psychological reasons associated with severe pain that can impact on recovery, the fact that severe pain is a risk factor in developing chronic pain syndrome and the associated costs for everyone involved."

The NICS-VTF Fellowship will allow Mr Marshall to establish a structured mechanism that enables paramedics to consult with a clinical specialist in cases of difficult pain management. This project will include the revision of the pain scoring system, introducing the most appropriate scoring system, new pharmacological agents to better manage severe pain, and improved monitoring and reporting of the outcomes of pain management in the pre-hospital setting.

"As Australia's national agency for closing gaps in health care, NICS is delighted to award this Fellowship to Mr Marshall. Through the generous support of the Victorian Trauma Foundation, this work will make an important contribution to improving the quality of care provided by our emergency medical service," said NICS Chief Executive Officer, Dr Heather Buchan.

Mr Marshall will join five other health professionals from Victoria, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia in the NICS Fellowship program for 2007.

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www.nicssl.com.au

.../2

Note to editors

The National Institute of Clinical Studies (NICS), www.nicsl.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 Victorian Trauma Foundation

The Victorian Trauma Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that is committed to saving and improving lives through research and development.

The Foundation aims to improve the delivery of care in the emergency, clinical and primary rehabilitation setting to trauma patients in Victoria, with the goal of achieving a substantial reduction in preventable death and permanent disabilities throughout the state.

For more information: www.vtf.com.au