

MEDIA RELEASE

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Emerging Researchers in Ageing present world firsts at Conference

New research presented today reveals the positive effects that choir therapy has on the brains of older people suffering from depression.

PhD candidate and registered psychotherapist Kirstin Robertson-Gillam tested participants before and after choir therapy using QEEG scans and found some amazing results.

“The scans show that the asymmetrical effects of depression on the brain were re-balanced after an eight week choir therapy intervention,” Ms Robertson-Gillam said.

Presented as part of the Emerging Researchers in Ageing (ERA) Conference being hosted by the University of Queensland/ Blue Care Research & Practice Development Centre in Brisbane today, Ms Robertson-Gillam’s research also found that depression scores dropped significantly and well-being scores increased across all choir participants.

“My previous research showed the benefits of choir therapy on depression and dementia through increased cognitive and social awareness, improved verbal communication and providing a sense of community,” Ms Robertson-Gillam said.

“This QEEG research provides biological evidence that choir therapy significantly affects brain wave patterns and decreases depression.”

Also presenting a research first at today’s conference is Hamish Robertson, whose work is adding a spatial dimension to dementia research, by mapping projected dementia prevalence rates in Google Earth and providing a three dimensional model.

“A geographical perspective links and integrates the social, structural, economic and environmental domains in a meaningful way that can be viewed by everyone.

“This perspective has the potential to support better, more accurate, faster and more effective responses to ageing by bringing together conceptual, technical, communicative and visual technologies,” Mr Robertson said.

These are just two of a number of papers being presented at today’s conference covering a wide range of ageing issues including, Aged Care Workforce, Housing and Resources and Biological and Physiological Ageing

The [ERA conference](#) is the only national conference in Australia focusing exclusively on the work of higher degree research students undertaking research in ageing. Based at Monash University and supported by the ARC Centre for Population Ageing Research (CEPAR) the ERA initiative provides a number of opportunities for emerging researchers across a range of disciplines.

The ERA conference would like to thank its sponsors & supporters: Wesley Mission Brisbane, Australian Association of Gerontology, Blue Care, University of Queensland, Monash University, and CEPAR.

Full conference program is available here: <http://www.uq.edu.au/bluecare/docs/era2012-program.pdf>

For more information contact **Melanie Brake** on 0479 072 233