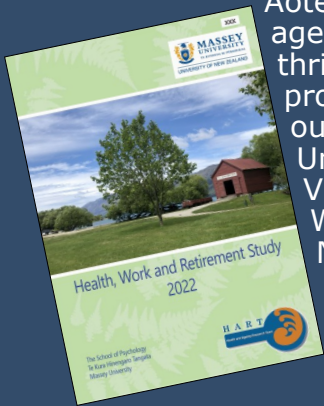


Greetings from the Health & Ageing Research Team

A message from Professor Fiona Alpass and Dr Brendan Stevenson, Co-Principal Investigators:

As we end the year, we wish to thank you again for your contributions to the NZ Health, Work, and Retirement (NZHWR) study. Your involvement plays a pivotal role in advancing our understanding of ageing in Aotearoa New Zealand. It has been a big year for the Health and Ageing Research Team! A highlight was the launch of our book "Ageing in Aotearoa" celebrating 18-years of the New Zealand Health, Work and Retirement study (see the full story on page 2). This year has also seen a number of team members awarded grants and prizes for their research (see pages 5/6). As we wind up the MBIE-funded project on the participation of older New Zealanders in the workforce (2017-2023) we are excited to announce we have been awarded a further 5 years of funding from the MBIE Endeavour Fund. The new research programme, "Modifiable Pathways to Sustainable Ageing in Aotearoa", builds on over two decades of our ageing research, and aims to predict frailty or thriving in older age. This is a major programme of work and we have extended our team to include researchers from the Universities of Waikato and Auckland, Victoria University, Te Pūkenga and Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi. The NZHWR study will play a key role in this project and your continued participation in the study is instrumental in driving our research forward. We look forward to furthering our collective understanding of ageing with your continued support.



Response rates for the 2022 NZHWR survey

In 2022, 12,381 surveys were posted, of which 4,761 were to existing participants and 7,620 were to new participants aged 55-65. We are very pleased to advise that 5,523 surveys have been completed by participants and returned to the research team. We still have just over 1,000 original participants from 2006. Thank you so much for your ongoing contributions to allow us to understand your experiences of ageing in New Zealand. If 2022 was your first year taking part in the survey, welcome. Our new participants help to maintain the representation of younger age groups in the study.

Digital scanning of survey data

After successfully scanning the surveys since 2018, we were able to scan the 2022 surveys as each was received by the research team. This process greatly streamlines the data collection and its extraction into digital form, as it shortens the timeline for the analysis of collected data. Scanning also enables our team to archive the hard copies, by maintaining a PDF copy of each survey response and NIH consent form.

We hold a six-monthly \$40 supermarket voucher draw for all those who have returned their survey. The winner of our April 2023 draw hailed from Whanganui, and our October 2023 winner (who is a new participant), hails from Taupo.

If you need to update any of your contact details call 0800 100 134, email hart@massey.ac.nz, or visit hart.massey.ac.nz and click on "Update your contacts"



HART Newsletter November 2023

To view findings since the NZHWR study began in 2006, please browse our website: hart.massey.ac.nz. There you can view reports and publications, and see where the HART (Health and Ageing Research Team) have attended and presented at meetings, conferences and online forums.

Now that COVID-19 is no longer such a threat, our team have been able to resume their travel to international conferences and meetings.



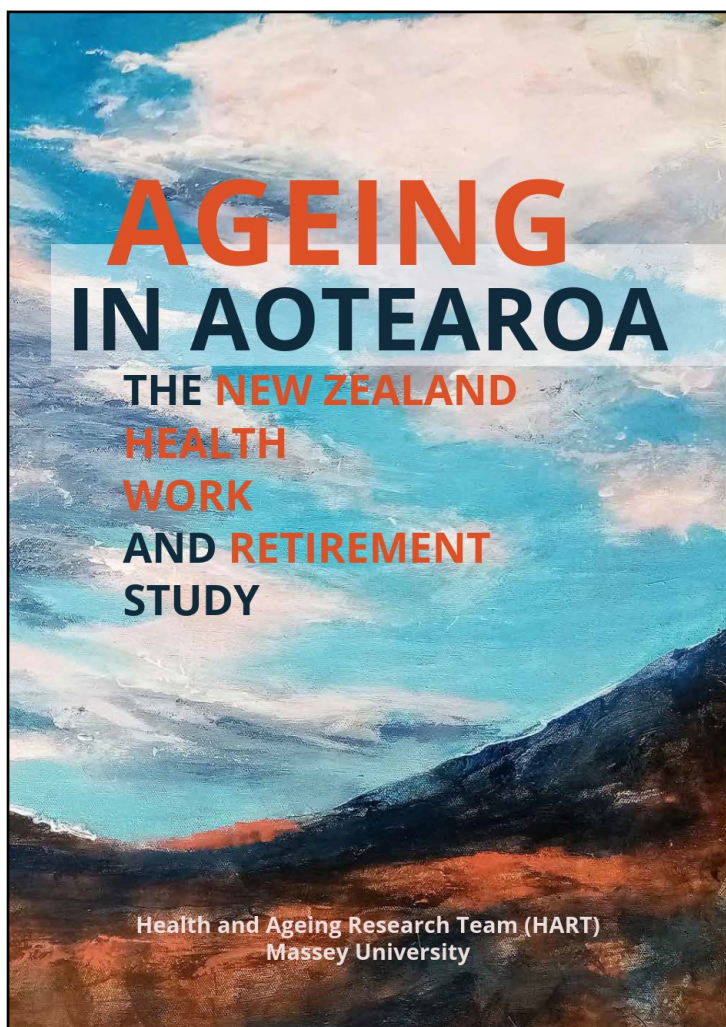
Principal Investigators
Dr Brendan Stevenson and
Professor Fiona Alpass

We are spreading the word

We are taking advantage of social media to spread the word about the Health and Ageing Research Team's activities and findings. Twitter followers of @MasseyHART are alerted as publications, presentations and reports from the study become available. We also maintain close ties with research stakeholders, including some NZ government ministries and health providers, ACC, local government, the WHO, the Commission for Financial Capability, and many organisations who work and advocate for older kiwis.



@MasseyHART



Grant Finch winner

Earlier this year we contacted all of our participants who had provided us with their email address, so we could invite them to send us a photo of a piece of their "art". We were very impressed with the over 350 entries that we received. There were carvings, photographs, paintings, sketches, poems, pottery, books, embroidery, crocheting, sewing, and more. It was a very difficult decision to choose a winner. In the end, we chose 40 entries which we showcased in our book and of those, four works received our special commendation. They were entered by Grant Finch, June Northcroft Grant and Jon Gulick. We were pleased that all the winners were able to attend our 7th June Symposium in Wellington.

If you would like to be included in any future competition, please make contact on 0800 100 134 or email us at hart@massey.ac.nz, to advise us of your email address.

The New Zealand Health, Work and Retirement Study: 18 Years and onward

The New Zealand Health, Work and Retirement Study (NZHWR) is the longest running longitudinal study of ageing in Aotearoa New Zealand. The study, which has followed the same groups of people (aged between 55 and 90) across 18 years, focuses on factors that impact the health and well-being of older adults, while also exploring significant events.

On 7 June, researchers from HART launched a new book at the Wharewaka event centre in Wellington. The book, "Ageing in Aotearoa: The New Zealand Health, Work and Retirement Study", describes the results of 18 years of our longitudinal study of ageing. The illustrated book provides an accessible summary of the findings from this long running study. The ability to follow people across time has provided powerful evidence for the effects of lifelong circumstances and environmental conditions (such as in the neighbourhood and at work) on loneliness, mental health, physical health, and quality of life. Such a study depends on the willingness of our over 5,500 NZHWR participants to contribute their personal information for the sake of developing this knowledge. The HART members acknowledge and thank their survey and interview participants for making this work possible by giving their time, patience, and interest. This book also includes a foreword by Professor Sir Michael Marmot, an internationally renowned epidemiologist who says: "This NZHWR study, with its perspective, rich longitudinal data, and insightful case histories makes a welcome contribution to a growing movement to address the social determinants of health". E copy can be viewed at hart.massey.ac.nz.



Professors Alpass and Stephens

The art competition



Our book includes stories from five NZHWR participants and also includes some of the artworks created by our participants.

One of the winning entries by Grant Finch (who also provided us with the cover art) is shown to the left.



Jon Gulick—winner



JP Cowey



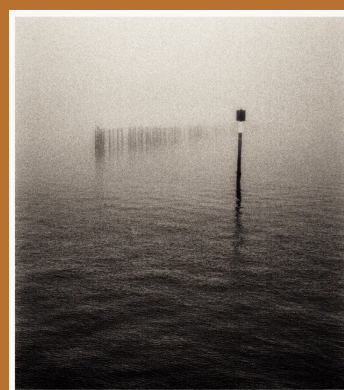
June Northcroft Grant winner



Jenny Gray

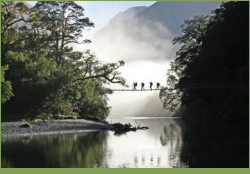
The book launch also featured keynote speeches by international and nationally renowned leaders in health and ageing research: Professor Perinder Sachdev (UNSW Sydney, Australia), Associate Professor Martin Hyde (Swansea University, UK) and Associate Professor Siautu Alefaio-Tugia (Massey University). In addition, Sir Michael Marmot and the Hon. Ginny Anderson (Minister for Seniors) provided videoed speeches to mark the event.

E-copies of the book may be accessed for free at <http://www.massey.ac.nz/hart/>



Alan Beattie

Further examples of our participants' art work



Christopher Porter



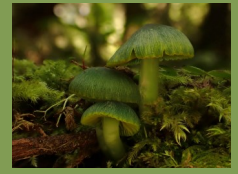
Janet Bradbury



Gilly Brodie



Lynn Ross



Evelyn Moss

Introducing Dr Brendan Stevenson, co Principal Investigator of the NZHWR study



Dr Stevenson and his proud whānau

"Brendan's 2023 PhD flips the measurement of Māori ethno-cultural identity. Rather than relying on point-in-time identification with broad administrative ethnic categories, he argues cultural identity needs to be understood as a journey over a lifetime through multiple distinct cultural cohorts. An individual is a member of a cultural cohort in perpetuity, with membership shaping and fixing culturally specific beliefs and behaviours. Brendan identified these cultural cohorts in the origin stories of historical documents and narratives, alongside events that forced the formation of new Māori cultural cohorts at pre-existing stratifications. Existing cultural identity abstractions proposed by Māori theorists and researchers further enriched descriptions of these cultural cohorts.

The existence of these predicted cultural cohorts was tested in analyses of 3,287 participants of Māori descent born in 1941-1955 from Massey University's NZ Health, Work and Retirement longitudinal study."



Christine Roseveare

Fostering Rescue Cats: Enhancing Wellbeing for Older People?

Many animal rescue organisations have foster programmes for animals who are too young to be adopted, or those who need time for healing or adjustment. Community fosterers take foster animals home and live, work, and play with them for periods ranging from a few days to several months or longer. Research suggests there are potential mental, physical, emotional, and social benefits for older people from relationships with companion animals, but there had been limited research on fostering relationships.

Fostering, to allowing meaningful connections with companion animals without the long-term ownership, may enhance well-being for older people and reduce any barriers.

Aim: This research explores whether animal fostering can enhance the well-being of older people who welcome vulnerable animals into their home, as well as benefitting animals. It seeks to identify potential barriers to fostering by older people and assess whether and how foster programme organisers recognise the contributions of older fosterers.

Methods: This research combines a national online survey involving 108 animal rescue organisations with in-depth interviews with 14 rescue programme coordinators to explore the possibility of involving more older fosterers.

Initial Results: There are at least 40 cat or kitten animal rescue fostering programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand. Fostering programme providers value compassion, responsibility, and time availability in fosterers. They see these as qualities older people particularly bring to animal fostering. Programme coordinators see fostering as offering emotional connection, companionship, and as enhancing social networks and a sense of community. Potential barriers can include physical frailty, animals creating damage to property and struggles with the use of social media and web-based communications. The programme coordinators see potential for families to collaborate in supporting older family members who foster. Fostering programs in retirement villages and fostering in residential settings were areas with potential for future development.

Where to now?: Companion animal fostering has the potential to promote and sustain the health of older people while benefitting animals. The next phase of the research involves interviewing older fosterers to explore their experiences and examine whether companion animal fostering is health-promoting. Christine won "best poster" at the 2023 NZAG conf.

Conference attendance

In June, members of the HART attended conferences hosted by the Transforming Care Network (at Sheffield University) and the British Society of Gerontology (at The University of East Anglia). The team had a fantastic time sharing NZHWR study results and networking with other researchers in the field.

In their symposium, "Negotiating care in the context of multiple commitments: combining paid work and informal care across the lifespan", the team presented works associated with the longitudinal NZHWR data. Doctoral student Shanika Koreshi spoke on reconciling paid work and caregiving among older adults; Professor Fiona Alpass on employment outcomes for older carers; A/Prof. Mary Breheny on qualitative works considering flexible work arrangements for carers in later life; and Dr Rosie Gibson on qualitative accounts of young carers balancing their sleep needs alongside care, as well as academic and vocational duties. In their symposium "Social and Cultural considerations for understanding and supporting pillars of ageing well" Professor Fiona Alpass and Dr Rosie Gibson presented alongside colleagues from the University of Auckland (Professor Vanessa Burholt and doctoral candidate Julie Daltrey) concerning the social and cultural complexities of caregiving and sleep health.



Professor Fiona Alpass, Dr Rosie Gibson, Professor Kate O'Loughlin, Associate Professor Mary Breheny, and Doctoral Candidate Shanika Koreshi at the Transforming Care Network Conference, 2023 (Sheffield University).

NZAG 2023—Auckland, September 2023



Many of the HART team attended the New Zealand Association of Gerontology (NZAG) conference in September. This was a fantastic occasion with almost 200 attendees and the first face-to-face meeting since 2018 due to the pandemic. The team sponsored a booth to share the information about the HWR study research.

A/Prof. Mary Breheny, Prof. Fiona Alpass and A/Prof. Susanne Röhr

As Vice President of NZAG, Rosie Gibson had key roles in organising and presenting at conference, including student workshops and chiring sessions. Professor Chris Stephens was invited to open the conference with a fantastic keynote on the importance of housing and neighbourhoods for ageing well. We were also well represented across oral and poster presentations including a full symposium "Ageing in Aotearoa - The NZHWR Study: Highlighting 18 Years Of Research" where Fiona Alpass, Susanne Röhr, Ágnes Szabó, Andy Towers and Hannah Philipps-Wood presented their works on work environments, social determinants of dementia, health of older migrants, cannabis use and predictor of falls.



Dr Röhr

An accolade for Dr Susanne Röhr: The occurrence of more severe weather events like storms, flooding, and droughts due to a changing climate poses a threat to our living and working conditions – the foundations that determine our lifestyles. Cyclone Gabrielle, for example, left many people deprived of their jobs and homes. Given the importance of living and working conditions and lifestyle for health outcomes across the life course, there is a need to understand how climate change might increasingly impact healthy ageing and ageing in place. and what it might entail if we do not mitigate climate change.

Against this background, the HART member Dr Susanne Röhr received a Health Research Council 2023 Explorer Grant to co-explore with a group of citizen scientists how the health of our environment is important for our brain health, specifically. Susanne's project seeks to explore how adopting a planetary health perspective could be helpful in reducing the risk of dementia in later life – and what it might entail if we do not mitigate climate change.

More news from the HART

Dr Rosie Gibson was awarded a NZ Royal Society Marsden Fast Start grant for her project entitled "Sensationalising Sleep – Discourses and practices of sleep in Aotearoa". Rosie has subsequently been awarded a Fellowship with Surrey University's Institute for Advanced Studies to replicate parts of the Marsden-related research within the context of the British media with key advisory member, Professor Robert Meadows.

Associate Professor Susanne Röhr is the recipient of the prestigious Alzheimer Research Award 2022 by the Hans and Ilse Breuer Foundation which supports research, and clinical and community initiatives working to tackle dementia. The prize for early career researchers, is endowed with 50,000 Euros (ca. NZ\$90,000), which Susanne will use for research on unmasking social inequities in modifiable dementia risk and approaches for equitable risk reduction in Aotearoa. She received the award during a ceremony at the Museum of Modern Art in Frankfurt, Germany, in early October.

Dr Jason Mika (Tūhoe, Ngāti Awa, Whakatōhea, Ngāti Kahungunu), involved in the Kaumātua entrepreneur project, also received a NZ Royal Society Marsden Fast Start award entitled 'Manahau: In search of the original Māori firm and its philosophy of management'.

Lifetime effects of poverty take a toll in older age

Childhood disadvantage is directly related to levels of physical, mental and social health in older age, according to NZHWR findings. The HART investigated the lifetime effects of childhood deprivation, education, and adult wealth on health in older age. They say the study emphasises the need to address poverty urgently to curb both immediate and long-term disadvantage. Lead researcher Professor Christine Stephens says her team, including Dr Mary Breheny and Dr Ágnes Szabó from Victoria University, used information from a longitudinal survey across 10 years and life course history interviews with older people (aged 65 to 80) collected in 2017. They looked at how experiences over a lifetime, from childhood at age 10, are related to health inequalities in older age.

The study involved nearly 800 participants. "We found that childhood disadvantage, measured in terms of parental occupation quality of housing, access to resources like clothes and books, and overcrowding in the home, is directly related to levels of physical, mental and social health in older age". "Children who experienced lower socio-economic status generally had poorer health in older age. Although most people's physical health declined in general over 10 years, childhood deprivation was mainly related to health as people entered old age, not to the rate of decline," says Professor Stephens. Researchers also studied the pathways that might explain this connection. "Childhood deprivation is related to the levels of educational qualifications achieved at school and this in turn predicts income and wealth in adult life," she says. "Economic disadvantage in adult life is related to health in older age." These pathways, particularly the direct childhood disadvantage to late life health, have been found in recent longitudinal studies conducted in Europe too. "The weight of this evidence points strongly to the case for caring for and educating all children in our society if we hope to have a healthy adult older population," says Professor Stephens. The researchers recommend a shift away from the tendency to frame older people as "one frighteningly large homogenous group", in terms of media and public perceptions as well as in policy-making. The reality is an increasing diversity in older people's health status. "We need to shift the ways we construct our views of older people," says Professor Stephens. This includes treating chronological age as a cut-off point and using population averages across countries without accounting for economic and cultural differences.

"Present health promotion efforts, spurred on by concerns about high health costs for an ageing population, focus on exhorting older people to eat well and exercise, although these practices may largely benefit only those who enter old age with economic and health advantages. Focusing on lifelong wellbeing, starting with childhood care, will benefit all of society in the long term," she says.

And, of further interest



Dr Röhr (middle back row)

The HART member Dr Susanne Röhr had the opportunity to meet up with her fellowship cohort of Atlantic Fellows for Equity in Brain Health of the Global Brain Health Institute (GBHI) in the Netherlands in July. The multidisciplinary group of professionals from around the world work to reduce the scale and impact of dementia. As part of the convening, a delegation of fellows, including Susanne, visited the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, which exhibits 800 years of Dutch history, with original art of the great Dutch masters such as Rembrandt, Vermeer, and Van Gogh. The purpose of the visits was to discuss dementia-friendly tours of the museum so that people living with dementia and their families and/or carers could go and enjoy the exhibition.

A Guide to Supporting Older Adults in Pandemics

The scale of the COVID-19 pandemic has presented an unprecedented challenge for most countries. With continuing outbreaks and the emergence of new variants, recovery will be protracted and challenging. Research has only just begun to investigate the impact of COVID-19 and the government response measures, such as lockdowns, on our older adults. A guide to *Supporting Older Adults in Pandemics* prepared by the Joint Centre for Disaster Research and the Health and Ageing Research Team was launched at Massey University in Wellington. The report, based on local and international research, is intended for those who plan, coordinate, and deliver support to older adults, their family/whānau and communities, in response to pandemics. This report can be downloaded from hart.massey.ac.nz under outputs and publications/reports.

The report concludes that older adults are a diverse group with widely varying individual, social and structural circumstances. The pandemic has not affected them equally, with the greatest impacts felt by those already experiencing economic, social and health inequities. Successful recovery will demand an innovative and adaptive approach to support and service delivery. Policies, actions or programmes to support older adults in pandemics must acknowledge and reflect their diversity, with interventions tailored to groups within the older adult population. Actions should be based on strong community mobilisation, engagement, and participation from a strengths-based approach. The view of older adults which focuses on age-related deficits and vulnerabilities must be reframed to recognise and capitalise on the enormous contribution they make to their families/whānau, communities and society.



Associate Professor Siau Aalefaio (HART team member) held a Parliamentary Launch for her book "Pacific-Indigenous Psychology" and the "Caring for our Wisdom Bearers: Pacific Mātua (Elder)" care report, in the Grand Hall in the Parliamentary Buildings (8th June 2023).

This launch was hosted by Anahila Kanongata'a, chair of the Labour Aotearoa New Zealand Pacific Caucus.

Siau Aalefaio (centre)



Hannah Phillips-Wood

It was with much sadness that we recently bade farewell to Hannah Phillips-Wood who had been our very competent data manager for just over five years. Hannah began working for the HART after completing her MSc in psychology at Canterbury. Her main tasks for HART, were maintaining the data base, organising the participant lists and managing the data across the survey waves, as well as helping out with the newsletter and forwarding data to students undertaking post graduate studies on the HART data. Hannah has been accepted into the Police Force and started her training at the end of September.

We will dearly miss working with Hannah, and we wished her well on her departure for her new career in the Police Force.

A visit to South America

Christine Stephens attended the biennial conference of the International Society of Critical Health Psychology in Rancagua, Chile. She presented a paper entitled: "You are old Father William: Ageism in a Pandemic" which reported on some findings from the NZHWR study of Covid-19 experiences. The conference was very stimulating; there is world leading work being conducted in South America in the area of provision of services to people with disabilities. Unfortunately, many South American researchers cannot afford to travel to European countries where most of these health conferences are held, so this was a great opportunity to meet and discuss this work and share ideas about improving our public health services. And, to briefly enjoy some Chilean dancing, food and scenery.



To read any of our reports, or any of our other publications, scan the QR code with your phone or go to hart.massey.ac.nz and navigate to 'Project Reports'.

