

Conference Report for the Canterbury Medical Research Foundation

Recipient of CMRF conference travel grant: Petra A. Hoggarth, PhD Candidate and clinical psychology student, Psychology Department, University of Canterbury and Van der Veer Institute for Parkinson's and Brain Research.

Conference attended: 37th Annual Meeting of the International Neuropsychological Society, Atlanta, Georgia, USA, February 11-14, 2009.

Poster presented: A Nonlinear Model of Cognitive and Sensory-Motor Test Performance Can Aid in Prediction of On-Road Driving Ability in Older Adults (copy of poster attached)

Atlanta – the Conference

The International Neuropsychological Society annual conference was held at the Marriot Marquis in Atlanta, Georgia, USA on February 11-14th, 2009. The conference is regularly attended by North American researchers and clinical psychologists and neuropsychologists. The 37th meeting consisted of 14 paper sessions, 12 symposia and 10 poster sessions containing 803 posters. Attendance at this conference allowed me both to present my research work on driving in older adults, as well as to hear the latest in research on dementia and other neurological impairments which also satisfied my interest in clinical psychology.

There were 28 continuing education sessions run, two of which I attended. The first was “Ecologically-oriented neurorehabilitation of cognitive impairment across the lifespan” presented by Professor Anthony Stringer, Dr Benjamin Hampstead, and Dr Rebecca McCartney, all from the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at Emory University, Atlanta. The presentation focused on neurorehabilitation for a number of neurological conditions including traumatic brain injury, stroke, and Alzheimer's disease. Approaches included teaching internal strategies such as the use of mnemonics, attention and reasoning protocols, and making use of external compensatory strategies using written cues, or personal digital assistants. The strategies have been developed from findings in the research literature and are designed to enhance memory, attention, and problem solving skills to increase independence in those with neurological impairment.

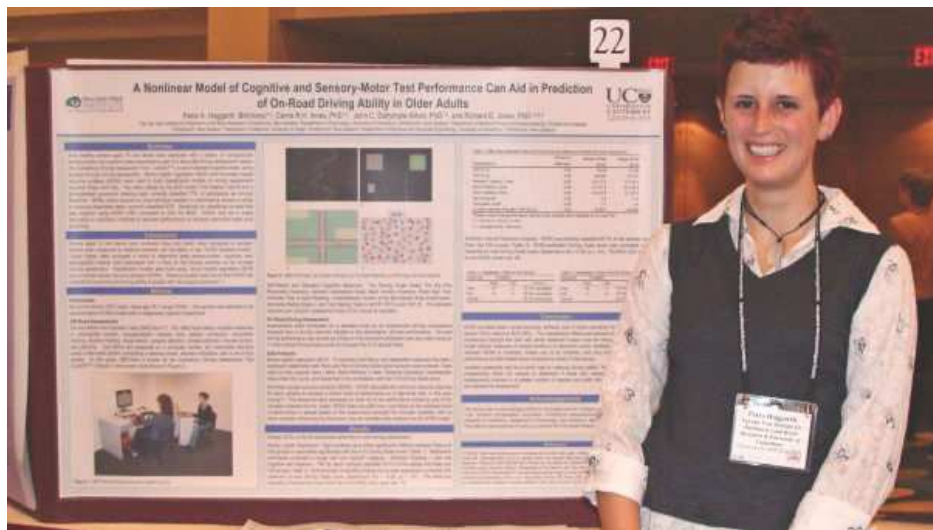
The second education session was “Post-operative cognitive dysfunction (POCD): research and clinical considerations” and was presented by Dr Catherine Price from the Departments of Clinical and Health Psychology, & Anesthesiology, University of Florida. This talk focused on the phenomena of post-operative cognitive dysfunction as evidenced through neuropsychological testing. This type of dysfunction ranges from 3% to 50% in those receiving a number of different operations, and the importance of detecting dysfunction in order to provide rehabilitation was stressed.

Perhaps the most interesting talk I attended was an invited debate titled “Cognitive/Neuropsychological Assessment is Critical for Learning Disabilities; or is it?” The debate was held between four heavy-weights in the learning disabilities field: Alan Kaufman, G. Lyon, Robert Mapou, and H. Taylor. The research of these speakers has been highly influential in the way learning disabilities are detected and treated in modern practice. The debate was both informative and humorous and was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

I also attended many additional paper and symposium sessions that covered many subjects including normal aging, Alzheimer's disease, and rehabilitation issues. I also attended several poster sessions that presented research on a wide variety of topics.

Poster presentation

My poster presentation was in the last session of the conference. At least one hundred people attended and I was asked questions regarding my research by several people. Most wanted information on a novel procedure I had used in the research – nonlinear causal resource analysis. All of my printouts of the poster were taken by the end of the 1½ hour session. I felt I was able answer people's questions regarding the research and statistical techniques well.



My poster on display