

# NY's Professor Irwin Epstein brings Clinical Data Mining to Adelaide

Professor Epstein visits the offices of CAHE to discuss Clinical Data Mining and the impacts on allied health research

Professor Epstein, School of Social Work, Hunter College, USA, has a long standing relationship with Australia, commencing over a decade ago conducting workshops and consultancies with the University of Melbourne, as well as assisting PhD students. This year the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) and the Centre for Allied Health Evidence collaboratively have brought him to Adelaide to conduct a Clinical Data Mining workshop in June. The focus of this workshop is Clinical Data Mining and how it can be used as a research tool in social work and AH disciplines practice settings.

Clinical Data Mining (CDM) involves teaching AH practitioners to systematically analyse and aggregate information routinely collected when working with patients, in both qualitative and quantitative forms. Considered an initiator and expert in the field, Professor Epstein is currently writing his third book on this exciting research area. His focus is promoting CDM as a research tool in social work and AH fields.

In his home country Professor Epstein primarily is centred on research in the social work arena, incorporating AH disciplines via social work interventions. In Australia his consulting has broadened to AH disciplines working collaboratively, or within a single AH discipline. An example of this is his visit to the Hunter Valley three years ago endorsed by the University of Melbourne, in which he conducted a workshop on CDM. The result of this workshop was a number of different AH research projects in a diverse range of topics, from mental health to patient interventions post-tracheotomy. Professor Epstein remains involved with this ongoing research with his frequent visits. CAHE is now exploring opportunities to work with Professor Epstein and utilise his expertise in a number of PhD research projects and providing a mentoring role for students and staff.

Speaking with Professor Epstein in Adelaide he stated that he *"was very impressed with CAHE's proactive approach in promoting research and new ways of thinking about evidence-based practice"*.

From Adelaide the professor heads to the University of Sydney's School of Social Work, where he is conducting a workshop on integrating practice-based research and evidence-based research. He is also conducting a CDM workshop at Westmead Children's Hospital for AH practitioners. He then departs for the University of Hong Kong where he will be conducting a workshop on data-mining dissertations for doctoral students, before returning to the USA in July this year. *Pictured right: Professor Irwin Epstein.*



**CAHE Stop Press !** CAHE staff are working hard on evidence-based practice initiatives. Dr Susan Hillier has just returned safely from Europe where she attended an international stroke conference. Matt Sutton is about to hold his second workshop for Journal Club leaders, and early journal club activities will be on the website soon. Mat Prior and Leah Jeffries (nee Nyland) are heading to Hobart in July to present at the Australian Allied Health Conference.



June 2007 Bulletin from Dept of Health (SA)  
Principal Allied Health Advisor Catherine Turnbull  
**Everything Your Mother Told You  
May Not Be True: Evidence Myth  
Busters at the JBI/Integral Health  
Quest for Quality Conference, USA**

After travelling some 30 hours from Sydney to Oklahoma via NY, Minneapolis and Dallas (yes, it was a holiday and yes, it was a cheap flight) I was wondering why on earth I was interrupting my supposedly blissful holiday with 1. a trip to Oklahoma City during the tornado season and 2. a conference that was not on food, wine or literature (my leisure pastimes).

Then I met my welcoming party, Lisa, Susie and Marthe. And look after me! Well they did! I was the honoured Aussie guest and was invited to participate in everything including Marthe Moseley's keynote speeches (who I highly recommend you take any opportunity to hear speak – motivational, grounded in clinical practice and fantastic ideas on how to get evidence into clinical practice for allied health).

Marthe challenged to think about 'what if we got paid to do only evidence based practice?' She proposed that this would encourage development of evidence and embed allocation of time to research best practice into all disciplines within health. What a wonderful thought. We then moved onto the conference dinner venue, a trendy purple hip bar and restaurant in the area affected by the Oklahoma bombing which has currently been undergoing a real come back with lots of redevelopment. Susie Jones (who seemed to have organised the whole conference and was energy ++++) then gave a hilarious speech on dispelling the myths your mother told you through the use of EBP, such as:

- ♦ using mayonnaise to get rid of head lice (a 'deep south' remedy - not effective if you leave on for too long as the mayonnaise will develop salmonella etc and if there is a cut on the child's head will enter the skin causing the child to become extremely unwell – but if left on for half an hour or so is extremely effective)
- ♦ not going out with wet hair as you may catch a cold (completely untrue as the evidence proves that colds are viruses and are transmitted through sneezing or coughing not through having wet hair)

All in all it was so worth the anxiety on the evening of the first day when tornados roared through 'tornado alley' killing 6 people (imagine me glued to the weather channel all evening - poised to leap into the bathroom which was the only room with no windows in my hotel room).

I encourage you to consider attending the JBI conference in Adelaide in November 2007 to hear more of these types of presentations. I am trying to entice Marthe and Susie to come to relaxed and friendly South Australia where we can show them that shiraz actually does reduce wrinkles – well, who have you ever seen frowning when having a glass of Australian wine?

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