



39th Annual Brain Impairment Conference

Sheraton Grand Hotel, Cotai Central, Macau

*Translating knowledge into practice:
Evidence, Lessons and Challenges*



26-28 September 2016

Report on the 39th Annual ASSBI Conference held in Cotai, Macau

26th – 28th October 2016

This year was the first time an ASSBI conference was held in Asia, and we chose a city that has been influenced by eastern and western cultures for a few centuries, namely, Macau. The theme of the conference was “Translating Knowledge into Practice: Evidence, Lessons and Challenges”. In recent years, we noticed that more and more academics and professionals from the Asian region are attending our annual conference. By moving our conference venue to Macau this year, we hope to make it more convenient for our Asian colleagues to attend. In doing so, we also hope to promote interactions, collaborations and networking.



Although the number of delegates attending this conference was not as large as some of the conferences held in Australasia, we still managed to attract 84 attendees from Macau, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, South Korea, Russian Federation, US, UK, New Zealand, and Australia.

On Day 1 of the conference, three workshops were offered. In the morning, one of our keynote speakers, Prof McKay Sohlberg’s presentation was entitled “Implementation Factors that Enhance Training of Procedural Tasks” and Prof Jacinta Douglas’ workshop was called “Measuring and coping with cognitive communication problems following brain injury. In the afternoon, Prof Skye McDonald presented on the topic of “Treating Social Cognition”.

Day 1 concluded with a Welcome Reception supported by our corporate partner, Shine Lawyers. The reception was an excellent opportunity for delegates to meet new friends while enjoying refreshments and it was great to have Jamie Shine, Will Barsby and Eloise Scanlan from Shine Lawyers there.



There were two keynote presentations on Day 2 of the conference. One by Prof McKay Sohlberg “Goal Attainment Scaling Using Motivational Interviewing for Measuring Cognitive Communication Treatment Outcomes” and one by Prof Glynda Kinsella “Working with Memory Groups and Mild Cognitive Impairment in AD”. There were also six concurrent sessions: Assessment; Community Issues; Novel Application of Technology; Intervention; Children and Adolescents; and Psychological Adjustment and Support.

During lunch time of Day 2 of the conference, Drs Elizabeth Beadle and Dana Wong ran a workshop for students and three guest speakers were invited to discuss and answer questions about career pathways in the brain impairment field in Asia and Australia. At the last session of Day 2, the President of ASSBI, A/Prof Tamara Ownsworth presented me with an ASSBI Fellowship, which was such an honour. After that, Tamara delivered her Presidential Address entitled “Advances in Psychosocial Care for People with Brain Cancer”. The day concluded with the conference dinner held at the Sheraton Grand where delegates were treated to a sumptuous buffet.



There were four keynote presentations on Day 3 of the conference. They were by Prof Sheena Reilly “Biological and Environmental Factors that Predict Variation in Developmental Language”, Prof Agnes Chan “Chinese Chan Medical Approach as a Possible Neuropsychological Intervention”, A/Prof Jennifer Fleming “The Use of



'Occupation' to Enhance Self-Awareness and Performance in Brain Injury Rehabilitation", and Prof Brendan Weekes "Cognitive-Neuropsychological Testing across Languages". Also, on Day 3, there were five concurrent sessions: Dementia and Memory; Social Communication and Family; Neurological Disorders; Methodology and Evaluation; and Services and Environmental Factors. It should also be pointed out there were poster viewing and data blitz during both Day 2 and 3.

At the end of Day 3, the President of ASSBI, A/Prof Tamara Ownsworth chaired the closing ceremony, during which she thanked all our sponsors and presented the following awards:

The Inaugural ASSBI Early Career Clinical Innovation Award which is designed to recognise innovation in the field of brain impairment consistent with our mission to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by progressive and non-progressive neurological conditions across the lifespan and was awarded to *Dr Dana Wong*

The Kevin Walsh Encouragement Award for outstanding Masters Degree student was awarded to *Tennille Thomasz* for her presentation entitled: *Why do some friendships succeed following traumatic brain injury (TBI)?*

The Luria Award for outstanding PhD candidate was awarded to *Diane Whiting* for her presentation entitled: *Acceptance and Commitment therapy to facilitate psychological adjustment after a severe traumatic brain injury: A randomised controlled trial*

The Travel Award for an outstanding student abstract was awarded to *Rebecca Jamwal* for her presentation entitled: *The use of electronic assistive technology for social networking by people with disability living in supported accommodation*

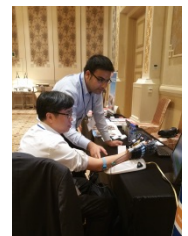
£50 book vouchers donated by CSP were awarded to Lee Cubis, Margaret Mealings, Adam Kaucki, Areti Kennedy and Lizzie Beadle for being the top 5 point scorers on the Smartphone App.

The conference concluded with a few drinks and canapes. As mentioned before, this is the first time that ASSBI has held its annual conference in Asia and based on the feedback I received during the conference I am sure that it will not be the last time. While the number of delegates of the conference was not large, I was impressed by the enthusiasms and quality of the presentations and the engagement of the delegates during the three days.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge a number of organisations and people. First, I thank the organising and scientific committees for their help in putting together the conference programme and in organising, promoting and running the conference. Conference Committee (CC): Tamara Ownsworth, Charles Zaroff, Michelle Kelly and Dana Wong. Scientific Committee: CC, Agnes Chan, Raymond Chan, Skye McDonald, David Man and Leanne Togher.

Second, I thank our student volunteers Lee Cubis and Lizzie Beadle and all the staff at the Sheraton Grand Macau who handled all situations with courtesy and professionalism.

Also, I thank our sponsors for their generous support: Shine Lawyers, Macau Government, Griffith University, School of Psychology, UNSW, Menzies Health Institute of QLD, Rehab Robotics Company Ltd, Griffith International, Cambridge University Press, Macau Professional Psychological Society, Department of Psychology, University of Macau, Macau Child Development Association and Cambridge Scholars Publishing.



David Shum trying on the Robot Arm from Rehab Robotics Co Ltd

And last but not least, I want to thank our wonderful conference organiser, Margaret Eagers from MERS Events for her high quality and professional services.

I look forward to seeing you on 1st to 3rd June 2017 at the 40th Anniversary Conference in Melbourne being convened by Dr Dana Wong.

Prof David Shum
Convenor

