

Progress Report October 2015

Autism in Rural Communities

Thank you so much for the generous support of the Val Lishman Health Research Foundation project, "Autism in Rural Communities" that is being run in conjunction with researchers from Curtin University (led by Professor Torbjorn Falkmer and Dr Sharmila Vaz) and with the support of South West Autism Network (SWAN).

The project is full swing with the prime focus over the past months directed towards recruitment of participants; both for the survey and the intervention study. To date, a total of 203 participants have completed the survey with 108 coming from the Perth Metropolitan Area, 94 from non-metro and one unspecified. Of the 94 from non-metro locations, 64 have come from the Southwest. Recruitment is ongoing for this phase of the project with a particular focus of increasing the representativeness of families living in the Southwest. Interested families can access the online survey using the link <http://goo.gl/GmsIVR>.

Phase two of the project is well underway with a total of 46 participants either included or scheduled to be included into the study over the next few weeks. In addition to these participants there has been interest from an additional 16 potential families to be included in the study. Recruitment into the intervention study will cease in November 2015.

The Curtin Project team and the Autism in Rural Communities Project Advisory Committee continue to meet regularly to drive the project forward to achieve its aims. This relationship has been integral to the delivery of the project and will continue throughout the remaining project timeline.

All funds from the Val Lishman Health Research Foundation have been injected back into the local community. Curtin University continues to provide research staff based within university working on the project on an in-kind basis, ensuring the allocation of raised research funds does not leave and directly benefits the local Southwest community.

Again, the researchers would like to highlight their sincerest appreciation of the support received from the Val Lishman Health Research Fund, South West Autism Network and the local community for their willingness to support and engage in this much needed research.

Should you have questions or queries regarding the project please do not hesitate to contact the team at autismstudy@curtin.edu.au or visit the websites www.swanautism.org.au and www.vlffoundation.com.au for further information.