



SUSAN FOOKS

The following references have been selected from the *Australian Family & Society Abstracts* database, produced by the Australian Institute of Family Studies to monitor the research, policy, and practice literature on family and social issues.

Families and older persons

To mark the International Year of Older Persons this bibliography provides an overview of research dealing with families and older people. It focuses on publications added to the Australian Institute of Family Studies Australian Family & Society Abstracts database in the past 15 months which are concerned with the International Year of Older Persons, health and social aspects of ageing, retirement and older workers, and carers and older people.

These references are available on interlibrary loan from the Institute's Family Information Centre. Some of the books and articles are available from bookshops and other libraries.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF OLDER PERSONS

Conference for Older Australians (1998), Interim Report: Prepared for the Minister for Family Services, Hon Warwick Smith MP, Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services, Canberra, 102p.

The main purpose of this interim report is to provide a summary of the work undertaken to date by the Conference for Older Australians in preparing for the 1999 International Year of Older Persons. A number of key themes and issues important to older people have been suggested as priority areas for consideration during the International Year. They include: promotion of positive images of older people in the media; recognition of the contribution that older people make through their volunteer activities; acknowledgement of the value of links between generations in families; awareness of the needs of older people when designing new products and services; increasing a sense of personal and physical security of older people; promotion of the benefits of improved health; encouragement of planning adequately for retirement; improvement of access to transport that takes into account the

physical needs of older people; provision of opportunities of older people to gain new skills; and encouragement of better access to existing services.

Council on the Ageing (1999), *Valuing Older Australians: Federal Budget Submission 1999-2000*, Council on the Ageing (Australia), Melbourne, 47p. (Australian issues in ageing, vol. 7/99).

The Council on the Ageing has responded to the 1999 International Year of Older Persons by publishing this submission to the federal government for the 1999-2000 budget. It outlines a series of recommendations which the Council believes would establish a solid base for the government to achieve the proposed goals in the following areas: community care; residential aged care; care and special care needs; health financing; health care services; pharmaceuticals; dental care; older Aboriginal Australians; retirement incomes; pre-retirement incomes; employment issues for older people; and housing.

Sheen, V. (1998), *Restoring Security for Older Australians: 1998-99 Commonwealth Budget Submission*, Council on the Ageing (Australia), Melbourne, 63p. (Strategic ageing: Australian issues in ageing, vol. 5/98).

The Council on the Ageing has prepared this year's Commonwealth Budget submission from the point of view that there is a crisis of confidence amongst older people. The Council puts forward a series of proposals that they feel would rebuild the confidence of older people. Their theme is restoring security for older Australians. The key principles on which the Council develops its policy recommendations for older people are: positive ageing; a sense of security; involvements and access for all; and fostering intergenerational harmony. With these principles in view, the Council makes recommendations in the

following areas: financing issues for the 1998-99 budget; International Year of Older Persons; National Strategy for an Ageing Australia; community care; residential aged care; carers; older Aboriginal Australians; health; employment issues for older people; income security; and housing.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF AGEING

Australia. Department of Health and Family Services (1998), *Aged Care: Make the Choices that are Right for You, Aged and Community Care Division, Department of Health and Family Services, Canberra, 27p.*

Presented in question and answer format, this document provides information aimed at helping people make choices about aged care that are right for them. Sections are: Your options; Help to stay independent and living at home (covering home and community care, community aged care packages, respite care and other support for carers); Residential care (covering care services provided, daily care fees, accommodation payments, rights, quality and legal issues); Groups with specific needs (people with dementia, people living in rural and remote areas, young people with disabilities); Further information and useful contact numbers.

Bevan, C. and Jeeawody, B. (eds) (1998), *Successful Ageing: Perspectives on Health and Social Construction*, Mosby Publishers Australia, Artarmon, NSW, 372p.

Aimed at professionals, service providers, students of gerontology and community groups involved with older people, this book presents a critical analysis of contemporary practices, processes and perspectives on the health and welfare of older people and explores the nature of contemporary gerontological culture in its structural elements, challenging the current owner-

ship of gerontology. The following chapters are individually indexed and can be retrieved either by author or title of the chapter: Successful ageing: issues and challenges by David Battersby; Innovation on the margins: aged care policies since white settlement by Michael Fine and John Stevens; The culture of ageing by Sharon Moore; Towards a renewed culture of practice by Judith Davis; The phenomenon of depression in elderly people by Basseer Jeeawody and Celia Bevan; Challenging the myths of older adults with disabilities by Robert Neumayer and Linda Goddard; The challenge of dementia by Peter Brown; Family responsibility: legal and ethical perspectives by Mike Collingridge and Seumas Miller; and, Challenges for the future by Basseer Jeeawody and Celia Bevan.

Kendig, H., Browning, C. and Wells, Y. (1998), 'Australian research on ageing, families, and health promotion', *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, no. 11, December, pp.169–181.

Findings from two studies from an Australian research program which has aimed to provide a knowledge base for public action promoting the health and wellbeing of older people are presented in this paper. One study, Health and Independent Lives in Old Age, is a qualitative investigation and the other study, the Health Status of Older People study, is a longitudinal survey of 1000 older people in Melbourne. The research parallels studies overseas such as the work on ageing, health and behaviour sponsored by the US National Institute on Ageing. A critical review of the international literature is provided

and the following issues are discussed: older people's views on health and their life histories, including their childhood and adult experiences and intergenerational relations; life span perspective on health actions; social influences on health actions in old age; family formation and health actions in old age; health actions and family transitions in old age; and policy and research directions. It is suggested that health promotion policies need to take careful account of the different needs of people along the life span.

Millward, C. (1998), *Family Relationships and Intergenerational Exchange in Later Life*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 44p. (Working paper no. 15).

It is important to explore family relations and supports in the light of the trend toward redistribution of private and public resources for family support services and welfare provision. This paper ties together many aspects of the intergenerational family obligations and exchanges experienced by people aged between 50 and 70 years. It is based on data from the Later Life Families Study, conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies in late 1996. The paper examines the interactions and flows of aid up and down between three generations of the same family, with some emphasis on prolonged youth dependency and elder care. Dimensions such as family size, availability and degree of interaction between family members are taken into account, as are the impact of the socio-demographic and personal characteristics of the respondents, their adult children and their elderly parents.

Walker, A. (1998), *Australia's Ageing Population: What are the Key Issues and the Available Methods of Analysis?*, National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, University of Canberra, Canberra, 49p. (Discussion paper no. 27).

Drawing on the extensive Australian and international literature on ageing, this paper first identifies key economic and social factors that are likely to have a strong impact on age related public expenditure in Australia. These include likely changes in life expectancies and the health status of the elderly; social attitudes and government regulations regarding retirement; wealth accumulation and wealth transfers across generations; caring for the aged by family, governments or voluntary workers; and the extent to which economic growth – and the consequent increases in tax revenue – can be relied on in the future to finance the additional public costs associated with ageing. The paper then reviews the tools available to analyse these key factors, either individually or simultaneously. Traditional as well as emerging analytical methods such as microsimulation are considered. The changes in data requirements arising from greater flexibility in the labour market (for example, part-time or contract work) and the loosening of family ties (for example, the availability of carers) are also mentioned. The paper concludes with a discussion of how the static and dynamic microsimulation models developed at the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling could provide additional insights when studying the effects of the ageing of Australia's population.

RETIREMENT AND OLDER WORKERS

Sharpley, C. F. and Layton, R. (1998), 'Effects of age of retirement, reason for retirement, and pre-retirement training on psychological and physical health during retirement', *Australian Psychologist*, vol. 33, no. 2, July, pp. 119–124.

As a first step in a series of studies examining the effects of retirement on psychological wellbeing, this paper reports the influence of age when retired; whether retirement is because of age, redundancy, or illness, or is voluntary; and the presence of pre-retirement education or training on anxiety, depression, stress, and physical health following retirement. Data were collected from 349 males and 385 females, ranging from 44 to 90 years and spread across the first five years following retirement from full-time work. Results indicated that men who retired earlier reported better physical health (although there were no significant effects for women), that both men and women who retired voluntarily were significantly less anxious, depressed, or stressed than those who retired for reasons of ill-health or were made redundant, and that the experience of pre-retirement education or training appeared to be associated with reduced psychological distress following the retirement act. In addition, exploratory data suggested that pre-retirement education which includes social, health, personal, and relationship aspects of the retirement process may be associated with lower psychological distress during retirement. Implications for psychological services and the training of psychologists are discussed.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies database, *Australian Family & Society Abstracts*, is a computer-based index to the research, policy and practice literature about Australian families and the social issues that affect them. Commonly known by its short title FAMILY, the database is publicly available on: Informit Online and the CD-ROM AUSTROM (RMIT Publishing); Family Studies Database CD-ROM and Biblioline on the Internet (US National Information Services Corporation).



Picture: Rhonda Milner

Australian Family & Society Abstracts

Wolcott, I. (1998), *Families in Later Life: Dimensions of Retirement*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 24p. (Working paper no. 14).

This paper explores aspects of retirement and family relationships in the lives of Australian men and women aged 50–70 years. The paper is based on data collected from the Later Life Families Study, a national random sample of men and women aged 50–70 years conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies in 1996. The linkages between family circumstances and retirement expectations and experiences are related to policy implications for the provision of a range of government benefits and community services. Discussion includes retirement age and timing; reasons for retirement; determinants of retirement adjustment and life satisfaction; social participation; couples, families and retirement; role of the family; predictors of ease in retirement; planning for retirement.

Wolcott, I. (1998), 'Later life workers', in *Work and Family: Beyond 2000 Conference, 12 May 1998, Perth*, Department of Productivity and Labour Relations, Perth. Online: <http://www.wa.gov.au/doplar>, 8p.

This paper presents data from the Later Life Families Study, a research study conducted by the Australian Institute of Family Studies. A national telephone survey was undertaken in late 1996 of men and women aged 50 to 70 years. Nearly half of the respondents identified themselves as being in the workforce. This paper examines how older workers perceive aspects of their working arrangements and conditions and retirement

intentions. Later life employment and the implications for family life are explored. Issues addressed include: the labour participation of older workers, age at retirement, including reaching a pensionable age, health, redundancy and family, reasons for retirement, satisfaction with time of retirement, retirement intentions, working hours and preferences, the importance of selected job conditions, phased retirement, underemployment, and planning for retirement.

CARERS AND OLDER PEOPLE

Lawrence, J., Karantzas, G., Lin, S., Gartland, D., King K. and Ryan, J. (1998), 'Patterns and principles in distributions of caregiving for elderly parents', Unpublished paper presented at the 6th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Melbourne, November 1998, 23p.

Family caregiving for elderly parents does not always reflect equity in how tasks and burdens are assigned to different family members. Women still do most caregiving, although in some contemporary families norms are overturned. The authors drew on distributive justice theory as a basis for examining the distributive patterns and principles for caregiving demonstrated by people of different ages and levels of involvement (for example, family and professional caregivers, retired and young adults). In a series of studies with different samples, they systematically varied the conditions under which caregiving for a hypothetical mother with a broken hip could be distributed among four adult siblings (two

daughters, two sons). Using an interactive computer program, they were able to present participants with information about siblings' life circumstances, compared with no information, and to vary the siblings' levels of commitments to work and their own children. Participants could easily update information and review their distribution patterns, making considered and revisable judgments. The systematic comparisons of caregiver circumstances help explain trends found in naturalistic and survey data, and suggest how assumed norms of 'appropriate distributions' can have multiple bases that lead to family inequities.

Payne, T. and Ehrlich, F. (1998), *Coping at Home: Carers' Use and Non-use of Community Services*, Carers NSW, Sydney, 73p.

Exploring the reasons why carers do not use services which are available to assist them in their work, this report describes: how and why the study was conducted; the profile of carers and care recipients; the help or extra help wanted; the past and current service use of the sample; knowledge of services; sources of information; barriers to the use of service by carers; and findings from the focus group. Using a structured questionnaire, 300 telephone interviews were conducted from amongst carers who called Carers NSW for a Support Kit in the period from August 1997 to February 1998, and seven focus groups of carers were also held around the state. Reasons given for non-use of services are identified and cover the areas of: values and attitudes; practical barriers; information-based; and conflict-based. Issues of cultural assumptions about caring,

flexibility, and quality of services are discussed. Recommendations to enhance carers' use of services are provided and the appendices present the questionnaire used in the study, detailed data on the sample, a calculation of dependency level and data, and English-speaking and non-English-speaking background focus group question guides.

Schofield, H., Bloch, S., Herrman, H., Murphy, B., Nankervis, J. and Singh, B. (eds) (1998), *Family Caregivers: Disability, Illness and Ageing*, Allen and Unwin in association with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, St. Leonards, NSW, 342p.

This book outlines a research project that aimed to capture the full spectrum of caregiving roles and experiences within the family. The project consisted of a longitudinal research component, which enabled the researchers to examine the effects of caregiving over time, and a health promotion component. The following major issues were discussed in this study: the effects of caring for people with disabilities on caregivers' wellbeing; how the characteristics of caregivers and recipients, and their social and environmental setting influence these effects; the extent to which caregivers use available support services; how the use of services relates to caregivers' wellbeing; intervention strategies that are most likely to improve the wellbeing of caregivers; and the implications of findings from this research for funding and service development at the federal, state and local level.

Susan Fooks is a librarian and database indexer in the Institute's Family Information Centre.

ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIPS AND WELLBEING STUDY

FAMILIES NEEDED

The Australian Institute of Family Studies and the University of Queensland, in conjunction with the Family Court of Australia, are seeking assistance in a study looking at adolescent relationships and wellbeing during parental separation and divorce. The study is supported by the Australian Research Council.

Who can participate?

Separating and divorcing parents and their children, and parents and children in intact families, are invited to take part in the study.

- *Separating/divorcing families* need to meet *all* of the following criteria: (a) separated or currently going through divorce; (b) one, two or three children living at home – at least one child aged 10–16 years; (c) living within approximately 80 kms of either the Melbourne or Brisbane central business districts; (d) no children from a previous relationship.
- *Intact families* need to meet all of the above criteria except that parents need to be married.

What is involved?

- For *separating/divorcing families*: (a) each person in the family wishing to participate will be asked to complete a questionnaire; (b) at this time, an interview will be arranged with a parent and one of the children, at a time and location convenient to them; (c) 12 months later, a further questionnaire will be completed and another interview conducted.
- For *intact families* completion of questionnaires is all that is required; interviews will not be conducted.

Compensation

As compensation for their time and effort, each family member will receive a movie voucher.

Further information

Contact Jane Muggleton at the Australian Institute of Family Studies on (03) 9214 7851, or Matt Vance or Carla Ward at the University of Queensland Family Centre on (07) 3365 7294.