

# ASPIRIN

SPRING 2011

## PARTICIPANT BULLETIN

### ASPREE STATS >>>

- Australians involved in the ASPREE study:
  - **4500 participants**
  - **1200 GPs**
  - **90 staff members**
- ASPREE participants from regional Victoria: **1000**
- Number of couples enrolled in the trial: **114**

### ASPIRIN FACTS >>>



*The ability of aspirin to prevent heart attacks and some strokes was first proposed in the 1940s.*

*Doctors observed that children who were given aspirin-laced chewing gum to relieve pain after a tonsillectomy bled more than those who did not have the gum. Aspirin reduced the ability of blood to form clots. Blood clots can cause heart attacks and some strokes.*

## *A Healthy Questionnaire*

Many factors can influence an older persons' ability to stay healthy, active, and engaged in the community. Stiff joints and reduced vision and hearing, for example, are commonly accepted as just being a part of growing older. However, very little is known about how these issues really affect a person's overall health and lifestyle as they age.

For this reason, ASPREE participants are invited to share their experiences in two short questionnaires called the ASPREE Longitudinal Study of Older Persons (ALSOP) 'Medical' and 'Social' Questionnaire. Professor John McNeil, who heads the ASPREE project in Australia, says that while participants are under no obligation to complete the questionnaires, he encourages participants to consider filling them in. "Information from the questionnaires will help researchers learn where and how to improve health care and services for ageing Australians,"



he said. "Whether or not participants choose to complete the questionnaires will in no way influence their involvement in ASPREE. We foremost value the ongoing commitment they have already shown to the main ASPREE study."

Each questionnaire should take less than 15 minutes to complete and all information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

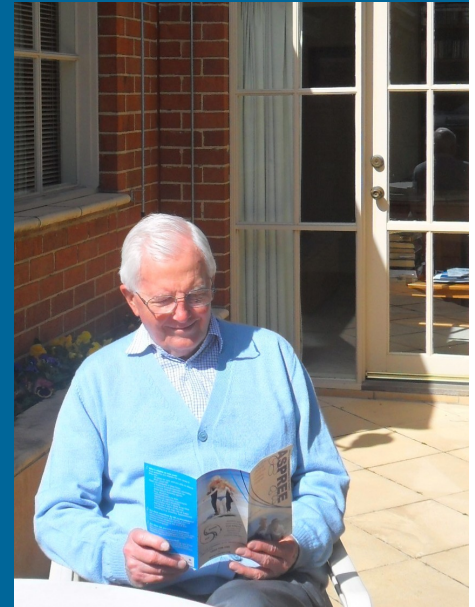
The 'Medical' questionnaire will be sent out later this year, while the 'Social' questionnaire is expected to be sent in early 2012. For any queries, please ring the ASPREE team on **1800 728 745**.

# ASPREE Profiles

**W**hen geneticist Professor Bruce Holloway asked to study biology at school, he was told by his headmaster to “do something more useful for your career”. Luckily, he didn’t take that advice — what followed was a long and distinguished career studying the genetics of microorganisms. He was even able to work in the company of five Nobel Prize recipients. Prof Holloway, who volunteered to be part of ASPREE earlier this year, strongly believes this is a good study to be involved in. “It’s an interesting aspect of seeing how research is done,” says Prof Holloway. “The benefits of ASPREE, which will take a few years to see, are going to impact a large group of people.” The long-time Melbourne resident has lived in Balwyn with his supportive wife Brenda, for 54 years. He admires that Brenda originally took him on a ‘risk basis’, as he had no job or income when they first got married.

Growing up in Adelaide during the Depression, Prof Holloway can remember beggars knocking on the door of his family home. His parents were highly supportive of his education — secondary schooling at Scotch College, followed by a Bachelor of Science at the University of Adelaide, and a PhD at the prestigious California Institute of Technology in 1953. He returned to work at the Australian National University, followed by the University of Melbourne, where he lectured for 11 years. He then became the Foundation Professor of Genetics at Monash University—an institution he remained at until his retirement in 1993. He remembers this experience fondly, as he was heavily involved in establishing courses and conducting research with overseas companies. Although Prof Holloway can not recall a particular instance that led to him choose his profession, he remembers always having an avid interest in biology. “I was very interested in living material

when I was young,” he says. “I went looking for animals in the local bushlands and I was very



*Former geneticist and now ASPREE participant, Prof Bruce Holloway, reading up on ASPREE at his home*

intrigued by how living things worked.” Today, Prof Holloway’s audience is a little older but no less enthusiastic — he regularly gives presentations on genetics at the University of the Third Age (U3A) and Probus clubs in Victoria. He is also kept busy with his grandchildren, playing tennis, continuing his research on the internet, and enjoying watching Hawthorn have a win in the footy. He encourages anyone who is eligible to participate in the ASPREE study. “Get involved—a very interesting group of people are involved in ASPREE and only our generation is entitled to be a part of it.”

## ASPREE Collaborating Organisations

- Monash University
- Menzies Research Institute (TAS)
- Australian National University
- The University of Melbourne
- University of Minnesota (USA)

## ASPREE Funding Organisations

- National Institute on Aging (NIA/NIH in the USA)
- National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (NHMRC)
- CSIRO
- Victorian Cancer Agency (VCA)

[www.aspree.org](http://www.aspree.org)

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