A PRECIS OF THE HISTORY OF ACADEMIC PAEDIATRICS
IN NEW ZEALAND

The University of Otago and its Medical School have always been closely linked with
Scotland and especially the Edinburgh Medical School.

The University of Otago was founded in 1869 and Dr Millen Coughtrey was
appointed as the first Medical Professor in 1874. Professor John Halliday Scott, aged
26 arrived in Dunedin in 1877 and by 1881 had the plans for a complete Medical
course including "Midwifery and Diseases of Women and Children ".

The Medical faculty was formally created in 1891 and in January 1892 the Senate
approved the establishment of the MB ChB (NZ). In 1886 Dr Isaiah de Zouche was
appointed Lecturer in Diseases of Children. He was a Swiss graduate.

In 1895 there were 59 students in the School and by 1913 student numbers reached
143. Dr EH Williams from 1914 provided child care and retired in 1941

In 1923 forty one final year students were failed in the clinical examinations and this
brought to a head the shortage of patients in Dunedin to cope with the student
numbers. The University then decided that final year students should be sent to
Auckland Wellington and Christchurch.

This was successful and in 1937 the Branch Medical Faculties were created and Sub
Deans appointed in the three main centres. Dr W Gilmour in Auckland, Dr John
Cairney in Wellington and Dr A Nelson in Christchurch.

In 1941 the Medical School entry numbers were increased to 100 and in 1943 to one
hundred and twenty. At the end of the War up to half the numbers were reserved for
Returned Servicemen.

Sir Alan Moncrieff on a visit to New Zealand in the 1960s mentioned that he had been
approached about the creation of a Paediatric Chair in Dunedin in 1940. The War
clearly put an end to the possibility but Child care was not regarded as important in
the Academic hierarchy.

In New Zealand the lack of progress was possibly reinforced by the success of the
Plunket Society. It was strongly supported by the general population and General
Practitioners tended to defer to the Nurses on many infant problems. There were
Karitane Hospitals in Auckland, Wanganui, Wellington, Christchurch and
Invercargill. They had visiting medical staff and acted both as training schools for
Karitane nurses and also acting as long term care for the premature babies of that era.

Dr Montgomery Spencer of Wellington was one of the first well trained Paediatricians
in New Zealand and along with others, was highly critical of the rigid feeding
regimes in the Plunket system. He had his appointment terminated by the Society in
1938.
In 1945 Dr Murray McGeorge of the Department of Medicine was moved to Paediatric care as the first New Zealand full time Senior Lecturer in Paediatrics. He was the first full time Senior Lecturer in Paediatrics in New Zealand. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1971 and retired in the following year.

The syllabus had little time allocated for Paediatrics but the establishment was increased with the appointment of Dr Helen Deem as Assistant Lecturer in 1947 -she later became the Medical Director of the Plunket Society, Dr Neil Begg after War service in North Africa and Italy became Lecturer in 1949 and later as Sir Neil, also Director of the Plunket Society.

Dr Donald Malcolm, son of Professor John Malcolm (Physiology 1905) came from Palmerston North as Senior lecturer in 1963 concentrating on neonatal care, was made Associate Professor in 1972 and retired three years later. Dr Patricia Buckfield, Senior lecturer in 1967 also did great work in the neonatal field and in 1982 moved to Wellington as Director of the Puketiro Centre.

In 1967 Dr J M Watt was appointed as the Inaugural Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health in Otago. Jim was an athlete, an All Black in 1937, served in the Middle East and Italy, had postgraduate experience in London after demobilisation and was Senior Paediatrician at the Hutt Hospital and later in Wellington. He was an excellent clinician, a teacher of note and an example of fine Doctoring. Sadly he developed cardiovascular problems and took early retirement in 1977 and died eleven years later.

In 1968 Professor Robert Christie from McMaster University was invited to report on the Otago University Medical School and recommended that Christchurch facilities be expanded to help with the student numbers and that Wellington be more closely related to Auckland Medical School which was about to receive its first students.

Dr Robin Irvine, the Otago Vice Chancellor unfolded an alternative plan in 1969 recommending expansion of both Wellington and Christchurch to take 4th, 5th and 6th year students in the Clinical Schools of the University of Otago. Professor George Rolleston, the Sub Dean in Christchurch was well advanced with planning for such an event and the Wellington Board in December 1970 agreed to the establishment of the Wellington School of Medicine.

Dr MD Holdaway was appointed Senior Lecturer in 1967 and promoted to Associate Professor in 1974 and retired after being acting Head of Department from 1993 until 1997. He had a distinguished career at a difficult time in the University system.

Following the retirement of Professor Watt, Dr Graham Mortimer, an Otago graduate with postgraduate training in Birmingham, Sydney and Melbourne was in the Chair from 1977 until 1993 when he became the Dean of the School and continued to maintain his excellent work with the Medical Council, the Medical Research Council and the National Childrens Research Foundation.

Dr Barry Taylor, an Otago graduate, previously Senior Lecturer, then Associate Professor in Dunedin was appointed to the Chair in 1999.
Research in Otago was dominated by the Child Development Study headed by Dr Phil Silva for many years. Dr John Langley since 1978 has made considerable contribution to Accident Prevention in New Zealand.

Other Senior lecturers in Dunedin have been Dr CJ Hewitt 1978, Dr RJM Gardner 1977, Dr Rowland Broadbent 1987, Dr Michael Sullivan 1996, Dr John Holland 1997, Dr Andrew Kelly 1999 and Dr David Reith 2001.

Professor Stephen Robertson, became the Child Health Research Foundation Professor from 2002.

WELLINGTON SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Child care facilities were primitive in the early days until the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital for Children was opened in 1911. Staff included Dr Agnes Bennett 1912-15, Dr Daisy Platts-Mills 1912-15, Dr Thomas Horrax 1917-22, Dr Alexander Robertson 1922-26, Dr Eldon Litchfield 1928-32 and Dr LG Austin 1926-28. Dr TF Corkill, an Obstetrician by training was in charge of the child care from 1922-34 the start of three generation of Corkills on the Senior staff of Wellington Hospital.

In 1934 Dr Montgomery Spencer was appointed Children’s Physician having been well trained in the UK, USA and Germany. He provided outstanding Paediatric care to the city. Unfortunately he died of Typhus in North Africa in June 1943 when CO of the 2nd NZ General Hospital.

Dr John Cairney was made Sub Dean in 1937 when the Wellington Branch Faculty was formalised and followed over the years by Dr JO Mercer, Dr JK Keeling and Dr GP Hallwright.

Dr Reay Mackay who had a mixed Consultant practice became Children's Physician following the death of Dr Spencer. There were no Paediatric Registrar posts in the immediate post war years. In 1949 Dr Eric Burnard was Senior Medical Registrar in Wellington Hospital but he was not encouraged to play a part in child care despite his in depth training with Spence at Newcastle. He soon left for overseas.

Teaching of Paediatrics for the final year students was limited but Jim Watt in the Hutt Hospital became a stimulating focus. Richard Bush and Jeff Weston were appointed to the Hutt in 1960. Overseas speakers were invited to the Paediatric Society of NZ meetings - Mel Avery, Sydney Gellis, Stanley James, Donough O'Brien and George Maxwell all gave a lead as to how Paediatrics should develop.

Dr Ken North in 1970 chaired a Wellington group to plan for a full Medical School allied with Victoria University but failed because of economic problems and reluctance of senior staff at Victoria to have a Medical School on their campus.

The Dean of the Wellington School of Medicine Professor Frank Hall was appointed in 1971. Dr Mark Hoby now in Adelaide was appointed tutor Specialist in Paediatrics as the first Academic appointment.
Dr HJ Weston was appointed to the Paediatric Chair in 1975 having started as a Resident in Wellington Hospital in 1950. He had postgraduate training at Hammersmith Hospital, The Brompton and The Hospital for Sick Children where he was a Resident Assistant Physician. He retired in 1991.

Dr Keith Grimwood, a New Zealand graduate with postgraduate experience in Canada and at the Royal Children’s Hospital in Melbourne was appointed to the Chair in 1997 and has a special interest in Cystic Fibrosis and infectious disease.

All the Senior lecturers shared acute beds but also adopted special interests and were employed jointly by the University of Otago and the Wellington District Health Board
Dr Russell Franklin 1977-99 Endocrine and growth problems
Dr Margaret Lewis 1978-99 Special interest oncology
Dr Thorsten Stanley 1979-date Neonatal care
Dr Vaughan Richardson 1986-96 Neonatal care
Dr Geoff Aiken 1992-97 Neonatal care
Dr Dawn Elder 1995-date Neonatal and Child Physical and Sexual Abuse.
Dr Russell Wills 1999-2000 Community Paediatrics
Dr Lynette Sadleir 1999-date Child Neurology
Dr Esko Wiltshire 2001-date Metabolic, Genetics and Endocrine

Professor Kevin Pringle performs major Paediatric Surgery being appointed in 1987 and promoted to Professor in 2000. There is close liaison with Cytogenetics and Dr Joanne Dixon contributes significantly to Paediatric activities. The Departments of Orthopaedics, Ophthalmology, ENT and Neurosurgery also provide great support.

A new Childrens Hospital was opened in 1988 and major reconstruction of the Hospital and additions to the School of Medicine are currently underway.

CHRISTCHURCH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

The first Sub Dean of the Branch Medical Faculty was Dr A Nelson followed by Dr MK Gray and then in 1953 Dr John Landreth who had been responsible for the medical care of children was Sub Dean. In 1961 Dr Fred Shannon returned to Christchurch after postgraduate training at Hammersmith, the Canadian Red Cross Hospital at Taplow and The Hospital for Sick Children in Great Ormond Street. He worked closely with Dr George Rolleston planning the future role of Christchurch in the medical education scene.

The Christchurch School of Medicine accepted the first fourth year students in 1972 and Professor Shannon was appointed to the Chair that year with Dr George Abbott as Senior Lecturer. Fred gave outstanding service as Teacher and Clinician and gave a tremendous lead in the development of Paediatrics in New Zealand. Ill health caused early retirement. Dr David Teele was appointed to the Chair in 1992.

In 1974 Dr Brent Taylor was appointed as Lecturer (now Professor of Community Child Health at the Royal Free) in 1974 and in the early days Clinical Lecturers were Dr RTM Casely, Dr JP Musgrove, Dr JE Barry and Dr Rosemary Johnson.
In 1976 David Fergusson was appointed as Research Officer in Christchurch in an ongoing review of 1000 cohort of children that has provided much information and leading to David's promotion to a Personal Chair.

In 1981 Dr Ken Dawson was appointed Senior Lecturer and Dr Brian Darlow in 1982 Dr Philip Pattemore, Senior Lecturer in 1993 and Dr Michael Sullivan in 2000, Dr Susan Bagshaw in 2002 and Dr Maureen-Anne Meates-Dennis in 2004. Associate Professor George Abbott moved from the Academic Department and was appointed Clinical Associate Professor. Dr Rodney Ford was created Clinical Associate Professor in 2002.

Dr Brian Darlow, a Cambridge graduate was promoted Associate Professor in 2000 and as Professor and Head of Department in 2001. Paediatric Surgery is headed by Clinical Professor Spencer Beasley.

AUCKLAND SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Auckland Medical School admitted students for the first time in 1968. Prior to this, Paediatrics was taught in Auckland as a Branch Medical Faculty of the Otago School using Tutor Specialists to organise the teaching undertaken by the part time staff.

Dr SL Ludbrook was Lecturer in Paediatrics in 1944 and Dr W Gilmour was the acting Sub Dean of the Branch Medical Faculty. In the post war years Dr Alice Bush, Dr Leo Phillips, Dr Ham Fox, Dr Ron Caughey, Dr DMG Beasley, Dr Lang, Dr Alison Hunter all made considerable contributions to the teaching.

In 1954 the Sub Dean was Dr EG Sayers, later to become Sir Edward Sayers as Dean of the Otago Medical School in 1959. Dr RH Caughey was Tutor in Paediatrics. In 1959 the Sub Dean was Dr WE Henley and the Tutor Dr RJ Cantwell. In 1961 Dr Keitha Corlett was Tutor and 1964 Dr JM Costello. 1965 the representative on the Physicians Committee was Dr T Graham Fox and in 1968 Dr RH Caughey with Tutor Dr MR Miles.

In 1970 the Foundation Professor Dr RB Elliott, an Adelaide graduate was appointed and the first Paediatric students arrived in 1971. Dr JM Costello had joined the Department in 1970 as Senior Lecturer followed by Dr Max Morris in 1971 and Dr DC Mauger in the following year.

In 1971 Dr Ross Howie was appointed Senior Lecturer in Neonatal Paediatrics. He was later to do outstanding research work with Obstetrician Sir Graham Liggins. Dr Pat Clarkson also joined the neonatal team.

In 1973 the Rotary Club raised funds for the Chair of Child Health Research and this was later augmented by funds from a "telethon" which established the National Childrens Health Research Foundation. Dr Peter Gluckman was appointed as Research Fellow in the Department.
Dr David Lines was made Professor of Child Health Research in 1975 for three years and Drs Innes Asher and Alison Wesley appointed to Lecturer posts.

Dr John Dower, an American graduate was appointed to the Chair of Paediatrics in place of Professor Elliott who moved to the Chair of Research.

Dr Peter Gluckman followed Professor Dower in the Chair and developed Research into Neurophysiology with special attention to the prevention of anoxic brain damage.

Dr Diana Lennon, Senior Lecturer and now Professor of Community Child Health has more recently been involved in the problems of Meningococcal B infection and vaccine preparation and usage.

Auckland University Calendar in 2006 recorded :-
Head of Department, Professor M Innes Asher,
Professors, Innes Asher and Jane Harding.
Professor of Child Health Research Edwin A Mitchell
Associate Professors, Wayne Cutfield and Cameron Grant.
Senior lecturers, Malcom Battin and others.

This paper has been prepared, realising that there are many deficiencies, but hopefully will stimulate constructive criticism in the long term aim of reaching agreement as to how best record the history of Academic Paediatrics in Australia and New Zealand.

Jeff Weston April 2006