

# Franklin Women

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## August 2015 Newsletter

Mentoring. It seems to be the new buzzword in the health and medical research field and rightly so given nearly anyone you speak to in a leadership position comments on the critical role a mentor has played. If you had asked me 5 years ago if I thought having a mentor was important, I wouldn't have been able to tell you what a mentor was, let alone how you go about 'finding' one (believe it or not, back then it was not a term commonly thrown around the lab). Since starting FW I have come to realise that a true mentor, someone who makes time for you, listens to you and gives you advice with no vested interest (even the stuff you don't want to hear), is invaluable and I am lucky to have a number of women who I am grateful to call my mentors.

It is for this reason that I am SO excited about our upcoming breakfast event on mentoring with our guest speaker from Serendis Leadership Consulting (you can read all about it later on in this newsletter). But that is just the start. To give attendees the chance to talk with women in the field about their own experiences with mentoring, we have invited some amazing women in the health and medical research sector to join each table as its 'mentor'.

It is going to be a great morning – hope to see you there!

Melina

PS. Did we mention it is at the Tea Rooms QVB (tea!!!)

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## What happened this month

- [The Eureka Prize Awards Night](#) acknowledged talented scientists and science story tellers for their contributions to Australian science
  - NHMRC [10 of the best researchers](#) of 2014 were awarded, including some wonderful women of science
  - The [Medical Research Future Fund](#) cleared Parliament, next will be the appointment of the Advisory Board and disbursement of the first funds!
  - National Science Week was a huge success, with some excellent women in science events held at [UNSW](#), [Queensland](#) and [ANU](#)
  - Finally, congratulations are in order for our very own Melina Georgousakis who received the [Women in Technology Rising Star award](#)!!
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# FW Journal Club

*This month's Journal Club contribution comes from Maria Eliza Aguila, physiotherapist and PhD scholar at the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney. Happy reading!*

[Aguila M, Lagopoulos J, Leaver A, Rebbeck T, Hübscher M, Brennan P, Refshauge K. Elevated levels of GABA+ in migraine detected using <sup>1</sup>H-MRS \[proton magnetic resonance spectroscopy\]. NMR in Biomedicine. 2015;28\(7\):890-897. doi: 10.1002/nbm.3321](#)



**What were the aims of this research?** This project aimed to determine and compare the gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) concentration in the brain in individuals with or without migraine headache and to determine the diagnostic potential of GABA in the classification of individuals with or without migraine.

**What are the take home findings of your research?** 1. Levels of the brain chemical GABA are higher in people with migraine compared to people who do not get headaches; 2. GABA and migraine symptoms may be linked; 3. GABA levels in the brain have good potential to be used as an indicator for the presence of migraine.

**How does this research contribute to the field?**

Migraine is poorly understood despite being among the most prevalent and disabling disorders in the world.

There is no known brain chemical that can be used as an indicator for whether the headache a person experiences is a migraine or not. However, higher GABA levels may partly explain what causes migraine and how its symptoms progress. This is the first research to demonstrate these findings and this was made possible by the novel technique we used to accurately detect and measure GABA in the brain. Now we know that levels of GABA in the brain may potentially be used as an indicator for migraine. This makes diagnosis of migraine more specific than the presently used system based on a checklist of headache characteristics. Understanding migraine better will eventually help in developing effective treatments.

**Who are your collaborators and how did your work relationship come about?** My collaborators on this research are Prof Jim Lagopoulos, Dr Andrew Leaver, Dr Trudy Rebbeck, Prof Patrick Brennan and Prof Kathryn Refshauge. They are also my research supervisors for my PhD studies.

**What is your current role and organisation and how long have you been there for?** I am in my third year as a full-time international PhD student at the University of Sydney Faculty of Health Sciences. I am on study leave from an associate professor position in physical therapy at the University of the Philippines, where I have been a faculty member for more than 20 years.

**What new skills or projects are you currently working on?** I am presently working on a research project about distinguishing migraine from other recurring headaches. We are looking at how symptoms and disability change over time in people with headaches and what factors may be related to these changes. We are hoping that results of this research will add to the knowledge on how similar or different these headache types are and uncover potential pathophysiology mechanisms.

**Who is a woman that inspires you?** Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder of the Special Olympics and a force behind policies, programs and facilities for people with intellectual disabilities. She inspires me to be an instrument in providing opportunities to those who may be marginalised, in believing in possibilities despite drawbacks, and in making the world a better place.

**What food have you eaten too much of in your life?** Diet coke counts right? Someone used to call me a “chain Coke-er” because of how I consume the drink one after the other. It was my comfort “food” for as long as I can remember. Though I have cut back significantly on my Coke consumption since living in Australia!

*Have you published recently? Firstly congratulations! Secondly drop us a line at [hello@franklinwomen.com](mailto:hello@franklinwomen.com), we'd love to hear from you and are always on the look out for journal club contributors for our newsletter 😊*

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## Franklin Women Event

***Maud Lindley is the founding director at Serendis Leadership Consulting and guest speaker at our next event on Mentoring, Sponsorship and Career Coaching.***



It is clear there is much to be done to address the gender imbalance across several industries in Australia including the health and medical research field. Despite relatively equal numbers of graduates entering the workforce, the decline of women at advanced career stages and in leadership roles is an issue that organisations are increasingly seeking to address.

We at [Serendis Leadership Consulting](#) have worked in the area of gender diversity for more than 5 years and during that time we have developed several approaches to begin to address the imbalance. One of the most successful strategies has been in the area of mentoring and sponsorship programs for women at particular inflection points in their career. We find that mentoring helps women to gain new perspectives, ideas and strategies to advance their career and take action to overcome current challenges. Our programs are also critical in helping women develop meaningful professional connections and sponsors.

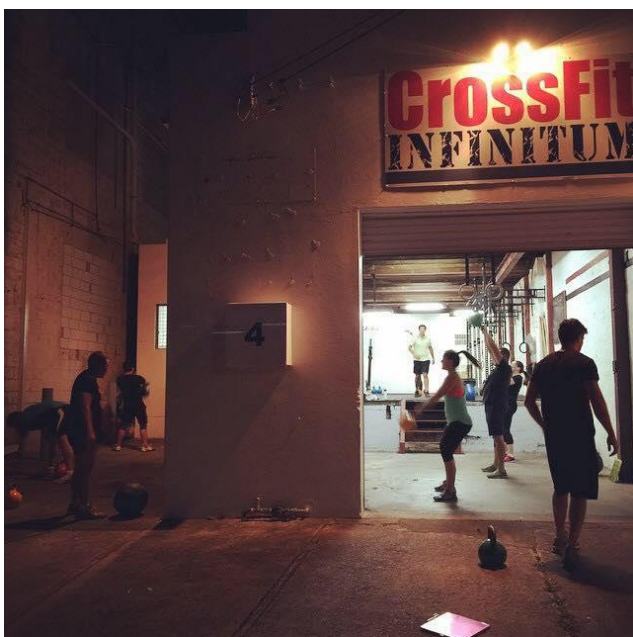
At the Franklin Women breakfast I look forward to talking through what true mentoring is, how it benefits the mentee, the mentor but also the organisation they are within, and the critical factors for a successful mentor–mentee relationship. I also hope to highlight how a mentor is different to sponsors – terms often used interchangeably but actually distinct types of career development relationships.

*Join us at our Mentoring Breakfast to hear from Maud as well as have the opportunity to chat with some amazing women in leadership positions in the health and medical research field who will be joining each table as its 'mentor'. For more info on our panel and to register visit our [website](#).*

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## Why I gave CrossFit a go...

*There's been the smell of spring in the air recently, so it's the perfect time to escape the indoors and get your body moving again. Ever thought about trying CrossFit? Well Franklin Women member Jessica Darlington-Brown loves it! And here's why:*



I'll admit, although somewhat hesitantly, that I am a competitive person. I love to challenge myself and I think that's why CrossFit works for me. Now I'm not going to list here the pros and cons of CrossFit, there are plenty of those articles out there. Rather I'm going to highlight why I gave CrossFit a go and why it works for me.

CrossFit is advertised in four words – “the sport of fitness” – and aims to build strength and cardiovascular conditioning through a variety of different workouts. There is one workout each day known as the work out of the day or “WOD”. While the WODs are always changing there are popular exercises,

which you often get to do every few months allowing you to see improvements. Since starting CrossFit I have seen some noticeable improvements in movements that I never thought I could do! For me, CrossFit makes exercise fun, empowering and satisfying. You get to work out with a group of like-minded people, who are there to not only get fit but also compete against the clock, themselves and each other. Who doesn't love an excuse to let out their competitive side?!

I have had sport-related injuries in the past, and unfortunately have recently succumbed to another. For me exercise is an important part of my daily routine and being forced to rest greatly affects my ability to balance work and life. But I have noticed the benefit of being injured in a CrossFit gym. I've had the incredible support and knowledge of the coach who's able to modify workouts, allowing me to continue to exercise whilst injured while looking after my body at the same time.

CrossFit may not be for everyone, just like any other type of activity. But for me, I've found a form of exercise that allows me to challenge and push myself, stay fit and socialise, and that works for me!

*Jessica Darlington-Brown is a research manager at Cancer Council NSW working predominantly in cervical cancer research.*

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## We are loving right now...

Instagram!! Did you know Franklin Women is now on Instagram (you can follow us [here](#))? Here are some of our other favourite Insta accounts and links:

- Marvel at the world around you with [National Geographic Travel](#), [Chic Darling](#) and adventure photographer [Alex Strohl](#)
  - Food and fashion combined into this amazingly creative [account](#)
  - Love them or hate them here are some of the best inspiring [happy quotes](#)
  - We couldn't resist throwing in some [hot dudes reading](#)
  - Here's some girl power inspiration with [Amy Poehler's Smart Girls](#), the [Feminist Thought Bubble](#) and [What It Means To Be A Woman](#)
  - Ballet, puppies and the most hilarious captions you'll read all day, what more could you ask for than [omg pickles](#)?
  - Finally, need some help getting your pics insta perfect? Try these [photography apps](#) and [hints](#)
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We want to include your contributions in our newsletter. If you have published your work recently or are doing (or know of) something that other women in our field would be interested in, drop us a [line](#). Want to receive our newsletters directly to your in-box? [Subscribe here](#).