

Professor Kelsey Hegarty

I was very honoured to be awarded the 2016 Charles Bridges-Webb medal for several reasons. Firstly and most importantly, I thought Charles Bridges Webb was a very thoughtful academic so it is really great to be given this named award. I remember nominating people and never thinking that my area of research domestic violence would be seen as mainstream enough to qualify for this general award. However, domestic and family violence has hit the front pages and certainly research in this area is expanding and is seen as very relevant to primary care. Finally, I hope that I can be a role model for others who work part time, particularly women as I have worked half-time all my academic career (until the last 6 months). I firmly believe that achievement is possible for women, although I think there is often still a glass ceiling for those who seek to hold high academic office.

The first time I saw Charles Bridges Webb was in 1995 at a General Practice Evaluation Program conference in Canberra at University House. I had received a GPEP fellowship and was presenting on prevalence of domestic violence and barriers to disclosure in general practice. It was the year he retired from University of Sydney at the early age of 60. At the time, he looked quite old to me, although of course I wouldn't currently think that now. I remember him as sharp, intelligent and kind. That day he asked me a very clever question and then on my way out he said "good work". A statement I treasured for some time.

I recently read his memoirs on the RACGP website and he started in country general practice in Traralgon the year I was born. He described that year:

*Another dramatic day of practice started at 4.30am with a caesarean section and finished with a patient who I knew well shooting his wife dead outside the children's home where the couple's child was in care. The tragic event arose out of a sad and difficult situation for which it was hard to see any solution, but the home staff accusingly felt that either I or the police should somehow have prevented the violence outcome, would that we had done. Later I had to go to Melbourne to give evidence in the man's trial for murder.*

Charles and I never spoke of this event but he was always encouraging and often was down the back over the many years at conferences, still asking good questions and being supportive. Often I was presenting on the last day in the last session with all the other awkward topics (disability, SIDS, refugees, child sexual abuse). This award as a researcher into domestic and family violence I think brings to light how much we have changed in the way we think about these complex, sensitive topics. Current primary care pays attention to these issues which underlie a lot of the physical and mental health burden in our society.

Finally, I would like to thank the people who nominated me, those who judged the award and I thank Charles Bridges Webb for being a great academic and a role model for us all.