

# DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL PRACTICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2024







## Department of General Practice

Established in 1975, the Monash University Department of General Practice is a globally recognised medicine, teaching and research department and one of the largest in Australia. The Department continues to strive for excellence in research and teaching in order to improve outcomes for patients through the advancement of general practice.



### *Step Away: Enhancing Health and Productivity Through Midday Walks*

This year, DGP's sustainability and wellbeing committee introduced a campaign to get people out of the office and keep active by going on a walk at midday after lunch.

## **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

Our 2024 annual report shares stories and achievements of our department and reflects on our future growth and development.

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# WELCOME FROM THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present the Department of General Practice Annual Report for 2024. Our staff and students have once again demonstrated their excellence and commitment to education and research, achieving remarkable outcomes. The highlights of these achievements are detailed in this report, showcasing our department's extraordinary work.

Among the many achievements this year, I would like to particularly highlight the accomplishments of Dr. Sharon James and Dr. Vera Costa, who were awarded fellowships in the prestigious Oxford International Primary Care Research Leadership Programme. Additionally, Dr. Sharinne Crawford and Dr. Vera Costa were successful in their applications for the Women's Health Research, Translation and Impact Network Emerging Leader Fellowship Program 2024. Dr. Jessica Botfield was honoured with the SPHPM HDR Supervision Excellence Award for 2023. I would also like to congratulate Dr Jennifer Neil, our Curriculum and Assessment Lead, on her promotion to the Associate Professor role. On a personal note, I am proud to have been awarded the Dean's Award for Excellence in Research Engagement and Impact.

I am delighted to announce that SPHERE 2.0, the continuation of the Centre of Research Excellence in Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health in Primary Care, has officially kicked off, having received further funding from the NHMRC for five years. I'm also delighted that the AusCAPPs online community of practice continues after having been awarded \$1 million funding by the Department of Health and Aged Care to support primary care practitioners to deliver essential women's healthcare. Our department has also been at the forefront of action on the epidemic of vaping that has emerged in the community.

A/Prof Chris Barton has worked closely with the University Health Services and a range of partners to address vaping among students at Monash University with funding from Vic Health. He also contributed to the development of forthcoming vaping cessation guidelines with the Thoracic Society. A/Prof Barton provides leadership and advocacy in the area of respiratory medicine and smoking cessation in his role as Convener of the Primary Care Special Interest Group with the TSANZ.

Under the guidance of A/Prof Chris Barton, the Department continues to be a leader in research training in Australia, providing research and academic skills to approximately 20 research students within the department. Our research training is attracting students from a wide range of degree programs including medical and science honours programs, research streams within the Bachelor and Masters of Public Health in addition to PhD students and academic GP registrars. Our department saw five PhD students complete their doctoral training in 2024, the largest number of PhD completions in a single year from this department. In Year 1 & 2 Teaching space, Dr Nadida Kachkouche and Dr Cathy Grech introduced the "My Cardiovascular Day" and "My Surgical Day at the Hospital" programs, which provide medical students with a simulated clinical experience.

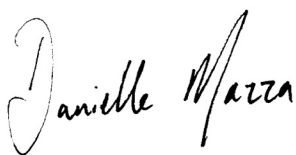
In outer Eastern Melbourne, the TROPHI program, has become a major departmental activity. Funded by the Windermere Foundation, TROPHI brings together the Departments of General Practice at Monash and the University of Melbourne with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners in a unique collaboration designed to build primary care academic and translational capacity in the region. TROPHI's capacity building initiatives are now all live, organisational relationships are strengthening and we have begun CREATE, our TROPHI-supported RACGP Educational Research Grant. CREATE, led by Monash and including all TROPHI partners, aims to address the ongoing challenge of providing quality training for future general practitioners.

Our department has also continued to strengthen our partnerships with international colleagues and researchers. We've had the pleasure of hosting several distinguished international academic scholars and collaborators this year, including Professor Wendy Norman from the University of British Columbia, Associate Professor Rebecca French from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Dr. Malcolm Moffat from Newcastle University, Ms Katelyn Battad from McGill University, and Ms Laraib Mazhar from PennState College of Medicine. These visits have further enriched our academic community and fostered valuable collaborations.

This year, we bid farewell to several colleagues, including Dr. Maryam Moradi, Dr. Noushin Aref-Adib, Ms. Jessie Zeng, Dr. Sonia Srinivasan, Dr. Chavy Arora, Dr. Yi Ling Low and Dr. Jagdeesh Singh Dhaliwal. Each of them has contributed invaluable expertise and experience to our department, and will be greatly missed.

As we conclude this year, I want to extend my deepest thanks to all the staff and students of the Department of General Practice, as well as our GP supervisors, for your tireless support, perseverance, and dedication throughout the year. Your contributions have been essential to our success, and I am truly grateful for your efforts.

As the holiday season approaches, I wish everyone a safe, peaceful, and happy time with your loved ones. I look forward to seeing you all in 2025 as we continue to build on this year's successes.



## Professor Danielle Mazza AM FAHMS

Head of Department of General Practice  
School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine  
Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences  
Monash University

## SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM



**Prof Danielle Mazza AM FAHMS**  
Professor of General Practice  
and Head of Department



**Prof Grant Russell**  
Professor of Primary Care Research



**A/Prof Jennifer Neil**  
Curriculum and Assessment Lead



**A/Prof Chris Barton**  
Research Training Coordinator



**Dr Atish Manek**  
Senior Lecturer



**Dr Nadida Kachkouche**  
Senior Lecturer



**Dr Cathy Grech**  
Senior Lecturer



**Ms Sandra Zovko**  
Senior Clinical Site Administrator



**Ms Levina Rahardjo**  
Executive Assistant to Head  
of Department

# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2016-2024

## PRIORITIES

## STRATEGIES

### Research and Education:

Innovative and excellent research and education focused initiatives that grow the national and international reputation.

- Build on existing researches strategies
- Increase use of digital technologies and educational innovations
- Align teaching content ton research findings
- Respond to market demand
- Drive market demand

### Partnerships:

Strategic partnerships that focus on University and healthcare priorities and provide growth in research opportunities and education innovation.

- Leverage Department research translation capability
- Connect and strengthen key regional, national and international networks
- Support Faculty to have a focus on primary care
- Foster interdisciplinary links with relevant partners within the University

### Profile:

Marketing and communication that positions the Department as a global leader in education and research.

- Raise the internal and external profile of the Department
- Integrate communication and marketing into all Departmental work

### Workforce:

Workforce development that addresses sustainability and promotes excellence within the Department in the areas of research, education, systems and processes.

- Build the Department's expertise through high-impact star recruitment
- Recognise excellence and innovation
- Increase exposure to and involvement in global best practice
- Provide an aligned, effective and efficient service
- Increase staff research and teaching capability

# EXTERNAL MEMBERSHIPS, COMMITTEES, INVITED/GUEST PRESENTATIONS

## Prof Danielle Mazza AM FAHMS

### Memberships/Committees

- Member of the Order of Australia (AM)
- Member, School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine Senior Management Committee, FMNHS, Monash University
- Member, School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine Research Committee, FMNHS, Monash University
- Co-Chair, Access, Care and Outcomes Subcommittee Member, National Women's Health Advisory Council, Department of Health and Aged Care, Australian Government
- Chair, Access to Termination and LARC Subcommittee Member, Women's Health Research Subcommittee Member, Victorian Women's Health Advisory Council, Department of Health and Aged Care, Victorian Government
- Member, Therapeutic Goods Administration Women's Health Product Advisory Committee, Department of Health and Aged Care, Australian Government
- Member, Endometriosis Advisory Group (EAG), Department of Health and Aged Care, Australian Government
- Member, Community Pharmacist Statewide Pilot Clinical Reference Group, Safer Care Victoria
- Member, Executive Committee, Victorian Health Research Translation Centre Collaborative
- Chair, RACGP Red Book 10th edition (Preventive Care Guidelines) Review and Update Editorial Committee
- Member, RACGP Research Expert Committee
- Member, NHMRC Partnership Projects peer review panel
- Member, RANZCOG Endometriosis Expert Working Group
- Member, Editorial Advisory Board, British Medical Journal Sexual & Reproductive Health

### Invited/Guest presentations

- Invited seminar - "The innovation and development of GP provided abortion services in four countries: Abortion in Australia", WONCA Europe Symposium, Trinity College Dublin, September 2024
- Invited presentation - "How far is too far?" Creating an evidence base for the safe provision of abortion among people living far from emergency services. WONCA Europe, September 2024.
- Invited presentation - Lessons from SPHERE: What does the research tell us? Access to LARC and Termination of Pregnancy Workshop, Victorian Women's Health Advisory Council, Department of Health and Aged Care, August 2024.
- Invited presentation - Unveiling the complexity of Pelvic Pain, Victorian Pelvic Pain Symposium (Health), June 2024.

- Invited keynote presentation - Achieving policy and practice change: approaches to stakeholder integration. Aarhus University, Denmark, May 2024.
- Invited keynote presentation - Preconception care in Australia, WHO Meeting on Preconception Care, Geneva, May 2024.
- Invited keynote presentation - What we have looked at and what we are thinking, RANZCOG Women's Health Summit, Canberra, April 2024.
- Invited presentation - Bringing about policy and practice change to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services for women, World's Health Summit, Melbourne, April 2024.
- Invited Presentation - RACGP evidence-based clinical guidelines: What is new and what is popular? WONCA Conferences, Sydney, 2023.

## Prof Grant Russell

### Memberships/Committees

- Member School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine Data Governance Committee
- Monash University Mentor Program
- Chair of PhD panels (varied)
- Steering Committee Member. Future Hospital - Future Health Steering Group. Monash University Office of the Vice Chancellor
- Member Primary Care and Population Health Advisory Committee (Monash Health)
- Advisor and keynote presenter for Monash University University Health Service Future Finding Project
- Member WONCA 2023 Conference Scientific Committee (CSC)
- Vice Chair Program Committee. North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) and 50th Anniversary Committee, North American Primary Care Research Group
- Consultant. International Advisory Group "Measuring Comprehensive primary care" College of Family Physicians of Canada
- Member, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care Hospital-Acquired Complications Curation Clinical Advisory Group (HACs CCAG)
- Chair of Editorial Committee, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners(RACGP) Australian Journal of General Practice:
- Member Academic Policy and Advocacy Committee Australasian Association of Academic Primary Care
- Mentor, AMA Mentor program
- Chair Primary Care Platform, Monash Partners
- Member, Monash Partners Executive
- Member, Monash Partners Board (primary care member, non voting)
- Board member, enliven (South-east Melbourne Primary Care Partnership)

## A/Prof Chris Barton

### Memberships/Committees

- Convener, Primary Care Special Interest Group. Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ)
- Academic Lead, School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine EMCR committee
- Education Activity Representative (EAR) - Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)
- Chair, Faculty ECR Fellowships Review Panel
- PC4 Scientific Committee member

### Invited/Guest Presentations

- Invited presentation - RACGP 2024 Academic Post program - live pre-application webinar
- Invited presentation - TSANZ Education Hub, Interim guidance for the management of e-cigarette use in adolescents and adults
- Unpacking Vaping cessation special interest group, August 2024

### Guest Editor

- Special Research Topic: Asthma and Mental Health. Frontiers in Allergy

## A/Prof Jennifer Neil

### Memberships/Committees

- Secretary WONCA Special Interest Group on Family Violence
- Deputy Chair RACGP Specific Interest Group on Abuse and Violence in Families
- Chair General Practice Site Leads Committee, Monash Medical School
- Chair Department of General Practice Education Committee
- School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine Education Committee
- School of Medicine Curriculum Committee
- Year 4C Assessment Working Group
- Department of General Practice Senior Management Team
- Department of General Practice Research Committee
- MonREN Steering Committee (Practice-Based Research and Education Network)

### Invited/Guest Presentations

- Invited presentation: Safer Families Festival of Ideas, tools used in the identification and response of family violence 2023
- Invited presentation: The University of Melbourne Medical Student conference 2023: advocacy in medicine
- Invited presentation: GPSA (GP Supervisors Australia) How to support your registrar on Trauma informed care, 2023
- Invited presentation: RACGP webinar "Overcoming barriers for addressing domestic and family violence" 2024
- Invited presentation: RACGP webinar "Supporting practitioners to do domestic and family violence work" 2024
- Guest presentation: RACGP webinar: Identifying and responding to the needs of adult survivors of child abuse: A survivors' perspective, 2024
- Guest presentation: WONCA Special interest group on family violence international webinar "Identification of family violence in primary care." 2024

## Dr Sharon James

### External Memberships/Committees

- Board Director and Member, Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA)
- APNA representations on the National Hypertension Taskforce Steering Committee, PARTNER national rural practice-based research network Advisory Committee, National Scope of Practice Review, and the Department of Health and Aged Care Frequent Hospital Users Program Co-Design
- Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society of Nursing Xi Omicron Chapter-at-Large Board, Member and Primary Health Care Chapter Lead
- Member Academic Policy and Advocacy Committee, Australasian Association of Academic Primary Care
- Member ECR and Capacity Development Subcommittee, Australasian Association for Academic Primary Care
- Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association, Expert Nurse Panel
- Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society of Nursing Psi Zeta Chapter Member
- Australian College of Nursing Member

### Invited/Guest Presentations

- Voices from the field panel - approaches to integrated sexual and reproductive health in primary care. 25th IUSTI World Congress Incorporating the Australasian Sexual and Reproductive Health Conference 2024

## Dr Vera Costa

### External Memberships/Committees

- Secretary, Australasian Association for Academic Primary Care
- Member ECR Subcommittee, Australasian Association for Academic Primary Care

## Dr Anisa Assifi

### Membership/Committees

- Treasurer, Australasian Association for Academic Primary Care
- Member, Women's Health Special Interest Group, Public Health Association Australia
- Member, School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine EMCR Committee, Monash University

### Invited/Guest Presentation

- Invited plenary speaker and panel: "Barriers to abortion: from the perspectives of adolescents" RANZCOG Annual Scientific Meeting 2023

### Guest Editor

- Special Issue "Optimizing Hormonal Contraception: The Pharmacist's Guide to Patient-Centred Care", Pharmacy

## Dr Karen Nolidin

- Editor, Australasian Association for Academic Primary Care

## Dr Jessica Botfield

### External Memberships/Committees

- Member, School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine EMCR Committee, Monash University
- Chair, ECR and Capacity Development Subcommittee, Australasian Association for Academic Primary Care
- Member, RACGP National Research and Evaluation Ethics Committee
- Associate Editor, Australian Journal of Primary Health
- Editorial Board Member, Culture, Health & Sexuality
- Editorial Board Member, Contraception and Reproductive Medicine

# STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS, AWARDS, AND RECOGNITION

## Prof Danielle Mazza AM FAHMS

Dean's Excellence Award for Excellence in Research 2024: Engagement and Impact (Individual) - Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University



## Ms Selma Karovic

SPHPM Student Excellence Award - Bachelor of Health Sciences Honours

## Mr Nikhil Mehta

SPHPM Student Excellence Award - Bachelor of Public Health

## Ms Bronwyn McDonald

SPHPM Student Excellence Award - Bachelor of Biomedical Health Sciences





**Dr Jessica Botfield**

SPHPM HDR Supervision Excellence Award  
Monash University Future Leader Postdoctoral Fellowship



**Melis Selamoglu**

Postgraduate Publication Award



**Dr Anisa Assifi**

International Federation of Abortion and Contraception Professionals (FIAPAC) 2024  
Conference Best Poster Award



**Dr Sharon James**

FMNHS Early Career Postdoctoral Fellowship



**Dr Vera Costa**

Fellow of Women's Health Research, Translation and Impact Network Emerging Leader Program  
FMNHS ECR Travel Grant

Transdisciplinary Understanding and Training on Research - Primary Health Care (TUTOR-PHC) Recipient



**A/Prof Jennifer Neil**

Family Medical Care Education and Research/ Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (FMCER/  
RACGP) Grant



**Dr Sonia Srinivasan**

Therapeutic Guidelines Limited/ Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (TGL/RACGP)  
Research Grant



**Dr Sharinne Crawford**

Fellow of Women's Health Research, Translation and Impact Network Emerging Leader Program

## OXFORD INTERNATIONAL PRIMARY CARE RESEARCH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Authored by: [Dr Vera Camoes-Costa](#) and [Dr Sharon James](#)

In July this year we took part in the Oxford International Primary Care Leadership programme, held within the picturesque and historic Harris-Manchester College, Oxford University. The College has been at Oxford University since the late 19th Century and is a vibrant and inclusive place to visit, stay and work. These lovely surroundings were perfect for the stimulating and inclusive 16th Oxford International Primary Care Leadership Programme.

A cohort of eight primary care researchers, from around the world, including two from Australia, one from Ireland, one from Germany, and four from Great Britain, were welcomed by our hosts Professor Kamal Mahtani and Sean Heneghan. Our cohort had not met each other previously but spent a week of learning, self-discovery and building connections as a group. The itinerary for the week included a range of social, collaborative, reflective and education activities, thus giving attendees the time and space to consider these learnings in our present and future goals. In addition, our hosts incorporated numerous occasions for our cohort to learn first-hand leadership, and clinical and policy influence and management skills from leaders in primary care, including our very own Prof Michael Kidd AO. At the end of the week, we left feeling energised and eager to pursue our goals in improving primary care internationally.

Applications to the three-year Oxford International Primary Care Leadership Programme are open to post-doctoral researchers who aspire to develop as leaders; keen to explore different aspects of leadership in primary care research and to develop a higher level of strategic operational skills. We would highly recommend this Programme to future primary care research leaders.

<https://www.phc.ox.ac.uk/study/primary-care-research-leadership-programme>



*L-R: Dr Sharon James (Monash University), Dr Helen Twohig (Keele University), Dr Kelly Howells (University of Manchester), Dr Vera Camoes-Costa (Monash University), Dr Helen Ashdown (University of Oxford), Dr Raphael Kunisch (Universitat Augsburg), Dr Taeko Becque (University of Southampton), Dr Caroline McCarthy (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland).*

# PARTICIPATION IN THE TRANSDISCIPLINARY UNDERSTANDING AND TRAINING ON RESEARCH - PRIMARY HEALTH CARE (TUTOR-PHC) PROGRAM - UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO, CANADA

Authored by: Dr Anisa Assifi

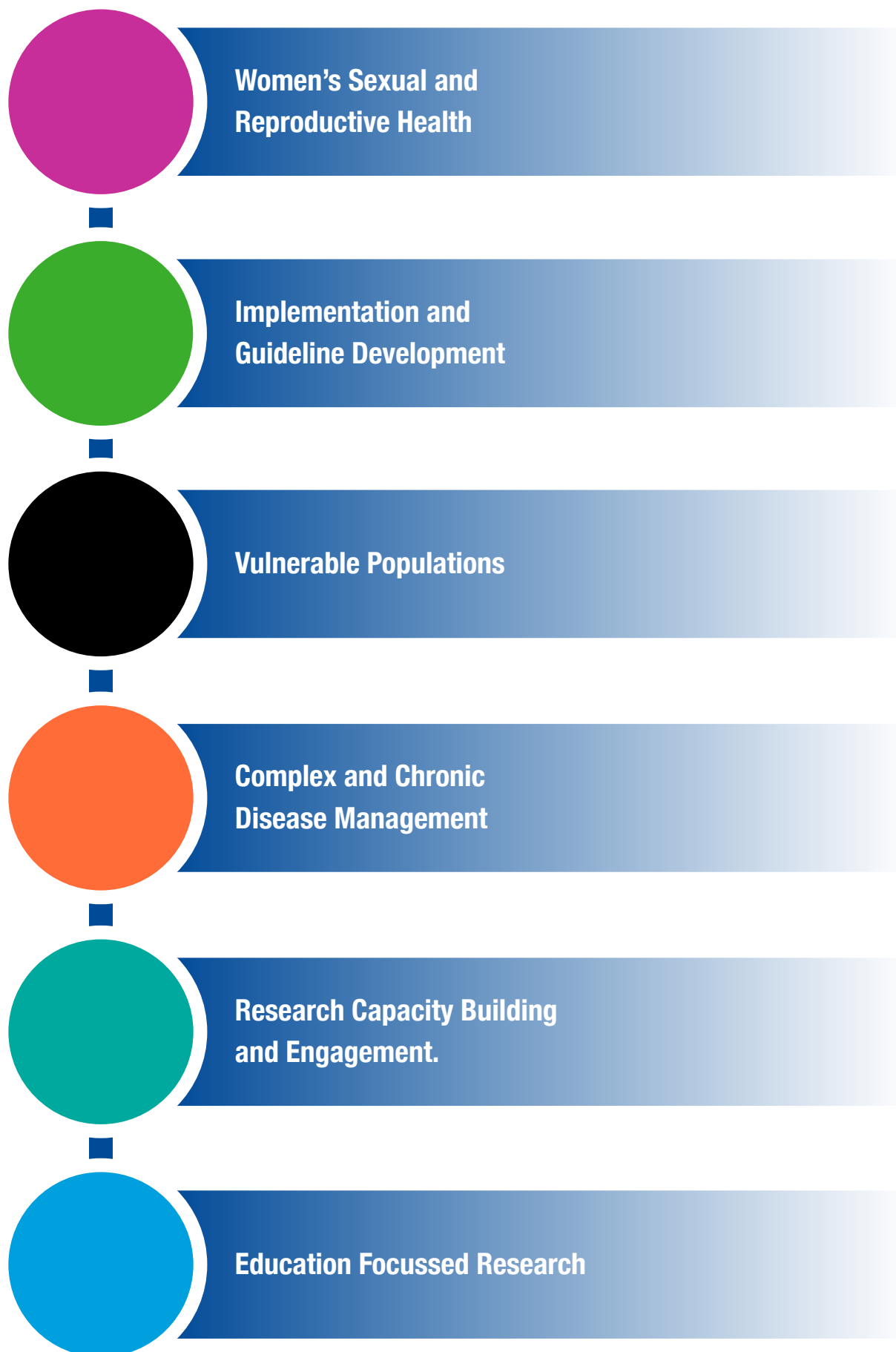
TUTOR-PHC is a one-year interdisciplinary research training program involving mentors and trainees from many disciplines such as nursing, family medicine, psychology, epidemiology, and many others. Each year, the Department of General Practice provides funding for a staff member or a student who has shown potential for research excellence in primary care to attend the program.

I had the opportunity to take part in the 2024-2025 TUTOR-PHC program. The program started in early May, in London, Ontario where we took part in a four-day symposium networking with program mentors and getting to know and build relationships with the other trainees. The year, eleven early-career researchers and PhD student trainees from across Canada, France, New Zealand and Australia were selected to take part in the program. With the beginning of North American spring as the backdrop, we had the opportunity to network, and exchange ideas, concerns and solutions as a peer group which benefitted my thinking and methodological approach to primary care research. As a group, we learned about interdisciplinary research teams in primary health care, the role of patients and decision-makers in research, mixed-method methodology, community and patient engagement in research development and implementation, and grant generation.

The main section of the program comprised two online forums lasting six to eight weeks with our assigned multidisciplinary groups. In the first session, we presented our grant research concept to critique and assist in further developing. To conclude the program, in the second session to be held in 2025, the group has been tasked with developing a interdisciplinary primary health care research mock grant proposal. Through this program, I have furthered my skills and understanding of primary health care research and developed relationships with researchers with similar research interests.



## AREAS OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE



## ● WOMENS SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Authored by: Ms Anna Goldstein and Ms Claudia Morando-Stokoe



The SPHERE Centre of Research Excellence in Sexual and Reproductive Health for Women in Primary Care has commenced an exciting new phase in its brief but highly impactful history.

The year 2024 represented the inaugural year of a second five-year funding allocation, announced by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in late 2023.

This means our team of more than 50 dedicated researchers and support staff can continue to focus their extensive knowledge and skills on the quality, safety, and capacity of primary health care services for better outcomes in women's sexual and reproductive health.

Their work entails:

- Research excellence to provide the foundation and evidence for clinical improvements, policy development and behaviour change to improve women's sexual and reproductive health services
- Supporting women's choices and capacity to make informed decisions regarding their own sexual and reproductive health
- Advocacy with stakeholders, national and state and decision-makers to increase access to the most advanced contraception and medical abortion services
- Assessing training, services and information needs of stakeholders - women's health care providers and women to achieve adequate availability and access to sexual and reproductive health
- Consulting widely and working collaboratively both locally and internationally with partners, Australian governments and the women's health sector
- Policy, stakeholder engagement, communications and marketing support for knowledge translation and wider dissemination to the community

SPHERE has four ongoing large-scale projects - the AusCAPPS Network, The ALLIANCE Trial, The ORIENT Study: The Endo-MP Project. Our EXTEND-PREFER Project was recently completed, resulting in two publications and a large media response. Our team at Monash has also published over 15 journal articles this year, and featured in more than 250 media items - news articles, TV reports, radio segments and podcasts focusing on diverse issues from online video about contraception in community languages to a nurse model of care for contemporary reproductive services and postpartum contraception.

Another major initiative is the SPHERE Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Coalition, bringing together key stakeholders dedicated to gathering, synthesising, and disseminating evidence-informed policy briefs, practice recommendations, consensus statements, and public letters. Read more about the SPHERE Coalition on the next page.

The years ahead promise new and greater advances as we establish and expand our plans for a series of important SPHERE 2.0 projects.





## THE SPHERE COALITION

Authored by: Ms Ella Healy

The SPHERE Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Coalition firmly and consistently advocates for more equitable and improved sexual and reproductive health care in Australia.

The SPHERE Coalition, formed in 2020, is a cross-sectoral, multidisciplinary alliance of more than 200 clinician experts, consumers, representatives from peak bodies and stakeholder organisations, and eminent researchers. Members hold a shared vision for improving women's sexual and reproductive health care, and use the highest quality evidence to work towards addressing current and emerging issues across state and national levels.

This year, through continued collaboration, the SPHERE Coalition has made outstanding contributions to improving access to contraception and abortion in primary care.

Most notably, the 2024-2025 Federal Budget announced the adoption of a number of recommendations made by the SPHERE Coalition in their response to the Senate Inquiry into Universal Access to Reproductive Healthcare. This includes:

- Permanent implementation of telehealth Medicare item numbers to support remote access to essential women's health services, including abortion.
- New 60 minute Medicare Benefits Schedule item numbers to support nurse practitioners' requests for ultrasound scanning for women seeking an abortion.
- Financial support for primary care health professionals to undertake training in the insertion of intrauterine devices.

In 2024, the SPHERE Coalition also made several submissions to the Federal Government, including to the Senate Inquiry into Issues related to menopause and perimenopause, and to the ongoing Scope of Practice review 'Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce'.

The SPHERE Coalition advocates for no cost contraception and abortion care for all women in Australia, and increased remuneration and training opportunities for primary health care providers including GPs, nurses, midwives and pharmacists. The SPHERE Coalition will continue its commitment to achieving no cost contraception and abortion in 2025 until every woman in Australia has access to these essential health care services when they need them.

**Collaborative clinical perspectives and academic evidence summaries are important ingredients for policy and regulatory reforms. The SPHERE Coalition brings together leading clinicians and primary care providers to highlight policy gaps, collate knowledge and progress sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing in Australia.**

*Bonney Corbin, Director of External Relations and Advocacy, Marie Stopes International*

**Through its many advocacy initiatives, the SPHERE Coalition has already had a huge impact on national policies and practices and will continue to go from strength to strength in influencing the SRH agenda! It is a privilege to be a part of the coalition and I urge anyone with an interest in contraception and abortion to join us.**

*Professor Deborah Bateson AM, The Daffodil Centre, University of Sydney*

## SPHERE MAJOR PROJECTS:

### AusCAPPS

As of August 2024, the Australian Contraception and Abortion Primary Care Support (AusCAPPS) Network moves into an exciting new phase after receiving funding for a further 2.5 years from the Australian Government and we finalise research outcomes from the study. AusCAPPS was launched in 2021 as a free, online, multidisciplinary community of practice for general practitioners (GPs), pharmacists, and nurses working in primary care to deliver long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) and medication abortion (MA). Until July 2024, AusCAPPS had been funded by an NHMRC partnership grant with partners in government and key industry, professional and family planning organisations. Achievements include:

- 2700+ members across Australia,
- Development of a multidisciplinary platform to support LARC and MA practice,
- Knowledge dissemination and the development of evidence-based content and resources supporting primary care clinicians in LARC and MA, and
- Ability for clinicians to ask questions to peers and experts and facilitated peer collaboration.



*AusCAPPS Implementation and Executive Team Outcome Evaluation meeting (June 2024): (L-R) Dr Satish Melwani, Dr Sharon James, Dr Sonia Srinivasan, Dr Karen Nolidin, Prof. Wendy Norman, Prof. Kirsten Black, Prof. Danielle Mazza, Prof. Angela Taft, Prof. Deborah Bateson, Dr Joly Kwek (front)*

### The ALLIANCE Trial

The Quality Family Planning Services and Referrals in Community Pharmacy: Expanding Pharmacists' Scope of Practice (ALLIANCE) trial is a stepped-wedge pragmatic cluster randomised trial in Australian community pharmacies to compare the subsequent uptake of effective contraception (hormonal or intrauterine) in women seeking emergency contraception pill (ECP) or medication abortion (MA) medicines, who receive the ALLIANCE community pharmacy-based intervention with those who do not receive the intervention. 2024 has been a big year for the ALLIANCE team. In the first half of 2024, we completed the active recruitment of women participants and delivery of the ALLIANCE intervention (person-centred effectiveness-based contraceptive counselling). We thank all the amazing pharmacies and pharmacists who participated in the trial for their hard work on the trial, recruiting women participants, and delivering the intervention.

In the second half of the year, the trial moved into its process evaluation phase. The team has been actively collecting data and conducting analyses. We look forward to 2025 when we will finalise the follow-up with our women participants and move into the final phase of the trial.



## The Endo-MP Project

The Endometriosis Management Plan (Endo-MP) project aims to develop and implement an Endometriosis Management Plan to support the navigation and management of endometriosis and chronic pelvic pain for providers and their patients through primary care settings. This is a three-phase project conducted across three years (2023-2026).

In 2024, we have been focussing on Phase 2 of the project. We have developed the Endometriosis Management Plan, based on findings from Phase 1, and we are developing tips, tools and educational resources for health professionals and patients to optimise primary care management of endometriosis and chronic pelvic pain. We've also had an Honours student project that focussed on how HealthPathways supports GPs with the diagnosis and management of endometriosis in general practice. Next year, Phase 3 of the project will focus on developing education materials, a media and communication strategy, pilot testing of the Endometriosis Management Plan, followed by evaluation, optimisation and implementation. The Endo-MP project is due for completion in 2026.



*The Endo-MP team (L-R): Catriona Rowe, Vera Costa, Alissia Kost, Sharinne Crawford, Sangita Chakraborty, Satish Melwani.*

## The ORIENT Trial

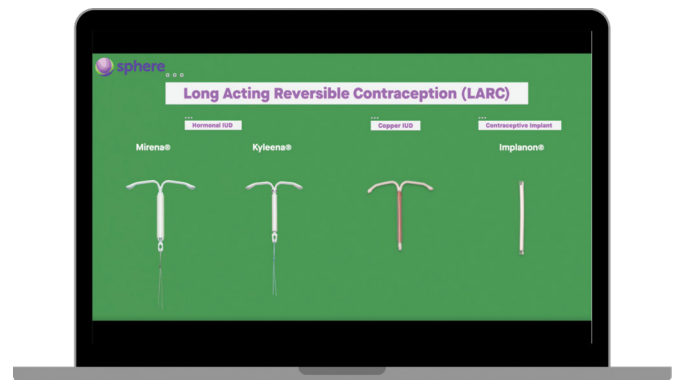
The ORIENT Trial (ImprOving Rural and regional accEss to long-acting reversible contraceptioN and medical abortion through nurse-led models of care, Tasksharing and telehealth) is a national stepped-wedge pragmatic cluster-randomised controlled trial. The primary aim of the ORIENT Trial is to assess the effectiveness of a nurse-led model of care in general practice at increasing uptake of long-acting reversible contraception and improving access to medical abortion in rural and regional areas of Australia. The trial protocol can be found here: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36948556/>. The trial is due to finish in late 2025.



## The EXTEND-PREFER project

The EXTEND-PREFER project aimed to assess whether an online educational video developed for culturally and linguistically diverse women speaking one of four languages (Mandarin, Cantonese, Hindi or Arabic) and for women in rural or remote areas of Australia would increase their contraceptive knowledge, preference for, and uptake of long-acting reversible contraception. The project was completed in 2024.

Findings can be found here: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38871444/> (culturally and linguistically diverse) and here: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39378629/> (rural and remote).



## ● IMPLEMENTATION AND GUIDELINE DEVELOPMENT

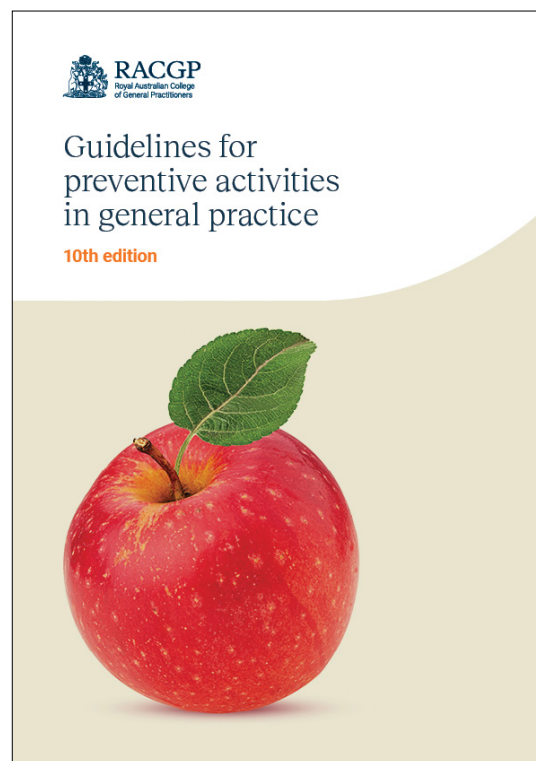
### GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTIVE ACTIVITIES IN GENERAL PRACTICE (RED BOOK)

**Authored by: Prof Danielle Mazza AM FAHMS**

From 2022-2024, Professor Danielle Mazza chaired the Red Book Executive Committee to develop the 10th Edition of the RACGP's Red Book. The Red Book is a major set of guidelines produced by the RACGP designed to provide the general practice team with guidance on preventive care by providing a comprehensive and concise set of recommendations.

The development of the Red Book 10th edition involved a transition from using the National Health and Medical Research Council FORM approach for guideline development to using the principles of the GRADE approach (Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development and Evaluation). A total of 23 new topics were included for the first time, providing an indicator of how substantial an update the 10th Edition is.

The Red Book can be accessed from the [The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners \(RACGP\)](#).



### DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDANCE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ELECTRONIC CIGARETTE USE (VAPING) IN ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS

**Authored by: A/Prof Chris Barton**

Throughout 2024, A/Prof Chris Barton has been collaborating with colleagues from across Australia as part of a writing group to develop the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand guidance for the management of electronic cigarette use (vaping) in adolescents and adults.

The guidance will be published later this year in the journal *Respirology* and launched at the TSANZ Education Hub in October 2024. The document aims to provide advice to clinicians that is practical and pragmatic and is framed to be compatible with the intent and details of public policy regulating e-cigarettes in Australia. The aims are to help clinicians protect their patients' lung and general health by:

1. Preventing EC uptake in children, adolescents, and young adults
2. Providing guidance for ceasing EC use in adolescents and adults who have never smoked
3. Providing guidance for ceasing EC use in people who currently or formerly smoke(d) who now use EC long-term.

The guidance follows research undertaken by PhD student Melis Selamoglu that showed GPs lacked confidence in their ability to talk about e-cigarettes with their patients and widespread concerns about the role of GPs in prescription of nicotine e-liquid to support smoking cessation in patients using e-cigarettes.

# AMPLIFYING UNCLOUD: VAPING AWARENESS CAMPAIGN AT MONASH UNIVERSITY

Authored by: A/Prof Chris Barton and Ms Isabella Papadopoulos

The Department of General Practice, together with the University Health Services, have embarked on a campaign to raise awareness and provide resources to students concerned about the harms of vaping in our community. The work forms part of the VicHealth Collective Impact approach to address the concerning rise in e-cigarette use among young people. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the harms of vaping, and build staff and student capacity to address vaping at Monash University.

The initiative addresses an urgent need for action on vaping among young people, and employs evidence-based health promotion approaches to inform and empower the Monash University student community to address vaping.

Five working groups have been established to spearhead the campaign's activities:

- 1. University Health Service Activities:** Doctors and nursing staff have received training in vaping cessation. Supported by QUIT Victoria a range of resources and supports are available to students concerned about vaping. A new vaping appointment type has been created for students wanting to talk to a health staff member about their vaping ensuring targeted support for students seeking help.
- 2. Vape Free Champions:** Students with an interest in vaping and health promotion were recruited to act as Vape Free Student Champions. They attended events across campuses in August and September speaking to more than a thousand students to share resources and increase awareness about the harms of vaping.



- 3. **Industry Engagement Activities:** In collaboration with South East Public Health Unit, Masters students from the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine had the chance to learn more about health promotion action in the south east to address vaping. The students created Vox Pop-style videos exploring what a vape-free future means to them. The content, shaped by student focus groups, will be featured on the University Health Services YouTube channel and Monash Sport venues.
- 4. **Monash Sport Competition:** Monash sport supported the campaign, displaying videos to raise awareness of the harms of vaping at its venues. They held a competition for a student to win a year membership to Monash Sport when they engaged with the UNCLOUD campaign resources.
- 5. **International Student Strategy:** We conducted focus groups with international students and staff involved in health and social services for international students to identify and develop tailored health promotion approach for the Monash International student community.

In addition to the activities above, UNCLOUD resources are being disseminated widely across digital screens, student lounges, and communal areas, ensuring messages reach all corners of the Monash community. An evaluation of the campaign is currently underway and a final report will be provided to VicHealth in December 2024.



## VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

### **COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK TO DEVELOP A STIGMA REDUCTION INTERVENTION FOR GPs PRESCRIBING MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENTS OF OPIOID DEPENDENCE (MATOD) IN VICTORIA**

**Authored by: A/Prof Chris Barton**

A/Prof Barton is collaborating with researchers from the Department of Social Work and Addiction Medicine specialists, to develop an education resource for GPs that will address negative perceptions of people diagnosed with opioid addiction and low prescriber morale in relation to safe opioid prescribing for this population.

The project, led by Dr Tejaswini Patil in Social Work, has received funding from a coalition of stakeholders including key frontline and Victoria-wide organisations such as Latrobe Community Health – Gippsland Pharmacotherapy Network, Hume Area Pharmacotherapy Network, Western Victoria PHN, Barwon South West Pharmacotherapy Network, South Eastern Melbourne PHN, Area 4 Pharmacotherapy Network and Cohealth, and the North West Melbourne Pharmacotherapy Network.

## COMPLEX AND CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT

### **THE SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE PRIMARY CARE INTEGRATION PROJECT - UNDERSTANDING THE GP-SPECIALIST REFERRAL PATHWAY**

**Project team: Prof. Grant Russell, A/Prof. Chris Barton, Dr. Surabhi Kumble, Dr. Angela Jones, Ms. Nishadi Withanage, Ms. Kath Watson**

Referrals into and from acute outpatient services have been identified as an area for potential collaborative reform. This project will identify and engage key stakeholders to identify priority areas for referral process improvement within south-east Melbourne. Using a convergent mixed-methods design underpinned by participatory action research principles, the project comprises three work packages: A state of the art review of published literature, semi-structured interviews and two deliberative forums with key stakeholders. Forums will draw upon our previous approaches to facilitate community decision-making. The forums will have different objectives and will be held both early and late in the work program. Outcomes will include mapping journeys and consensus-based approaches for improvements to the system of primary care referral to hospital outpatient care. The literature search for the state of art review is in progress and the first forum discussion has been conducted. Data collection for this project will conclude by the end of 2024.

## RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING AND ENGAGEMENT

### ACADEMIC POST UNIVERSITY SUPPORT PARTNER PROGRAM

Authored by: A/Prof Chris Barton and Ms Isabella Papadopoulos

The Department of General Practice continued to work with the RACGP through 2024 to deliver an Activity Program to support registrars develop academic and research skills as part of the Academic Post program.

Delivered with our partners from Bond and Griffith Universities, the program has been facilitated by the Department of General Practice since 2017 and was awarded the Dean's Award for Excellence in Industry Engagement for education in 2021.

The program comprises a mixture of workshops, webinars, and online learning and mentoring support to academic registrars around Australia. The Academic Post program has been very successful and received positive feedback from participants every year.

Academic Post program contributors and partners in 2024 included: A/Prof Chris Barton, Prof Grant Russell, A/Prof Jennifer Neil, Dr Jessica Botfield, Miss Isabella Papadopoulos. Partners and guest presenters: Prof Paul Glasziou (Bond University), Prof Nick Zwar (Bond University), A/Prof Loai Albarquoni (Bond University), A/Prof Jane Smith (Bond University), A/Prof Kylie Vuong (Griffith University), Dr Bryan Palmer (Griffith University), Dr Alyson Hee (Griffith University), Dr Emily Kirkpatrick (University of Adelaide), Dr Heleen Bontje (Past Academic Registrar), Dr Kate Johnston (Past Academic Registrar).



### THE VICTORIAN COLLABORATION FOR TRANSLATING RESEARCH OUTCOMES INTO THE PRIMARY HEALTH INTERFACE (TROPHI)

Authored by: Prof Grant Russell and Dr Riki Lane

TROPHI is a collaboration between the Monash University Department of General Practice, RACGP, and the University of Melbourne Department of General Practice. The goal of TROPHI is to drive high quality implementation and translational research that provides contemporary practice-based evidence to improve primary health care and patient outcomes in the outer Eastern Melbourne region of Victoria.

TROPHI has a strong focus on research capacity building and incorporates a number of initiatives aimed at supporting development of research capacity and opportunity for primary care professionals in the Eastern Melbourne region. Key initiatives in 2024 have included:

- Hosting a Translation Forum that provided an opportunity to connect GPs, primary health care professionals, academics and local stakeholders.
- Providing funding to Research Translation Fellows to support translational research in primary care.
- Advertising MSc/PhD bursaries to research students who were undertaking research oriented to the needs of primary care in the TROPHI region
- Seed funding for practice based pilot studies.
- Initiating the TROPHI mentor program.



## MONASH RESEARCH AND EDUCATION NETWORK (MonREN)

Authored by: Ms Emiko Hunt, MonREN Network Manager

MonREN is Monash University's Practice-based Research and Education Network. MonREN works collaboratively with general practice team members, and researchers to foster meaningful primary care research, education and academia.

In 2024, MonREN welcomed Emiko Hunt as its new Network Manager. Emiko comes with expertise in business development, project management, and marketing communications.

MonREN's focus this year has been reviewing and enhancing MonREN's strategic vision and building strong network foundations. Work undertaken includes:

- **An updated strategic plan for 2024–2026**  
The updated strategic plan focuses on three main pillars of work, reflecting MonREN's dedication to:
  - > Increasing MonREN's stability, growth and reputation.
  - > Improving community health through research, education and data.
  - > Supporting those who deliver general practice.
- **A new e-communications system and website**  
As a result of a systems and processes review, a new e-communications system was adopted and a new website built. These channels allow improved design, data collection, communication, efficiency and workflow.
- **Improved database management**  
A key focus in 2024 is updating and improving the network members database. A database cleanse is in process.

- **Membership and customer value focus**  
MonREN exists to service and support its members to collaboratively build general practice research. Member engagement and collaboration is vital. 2024 has seen:
  - > A members survey conducted to better understand member needs and values.
  - > Four interactive Academic Journal Club events, presented with the Department of General Practice.
  - > Scoping and planning of general practice-led research introduction resources.
- **Increasing MonREN's visibility and collaboration**  
We are building relationships with internal and external stakeholders; growing and developing partnerships and collaboration. 2024 has included:
  - > Increased collaboration with the Monash University Clinical Trials Centre, and Monash Partners.
  - > Presenting at the annual AAAPC Forum.
  - > Workshop with TROPHI.

Reflecting on the year, the Network Manager, Emiko, expressed her enthusiasm:

“The potential of MonREN as a Practice-Based Research and Education Network is exciting. This year has laid a robust foundation for our future endeavours. As we look ahead to 2025, our priorities include fostering collaborative research with our members, creating dynamic resources and events, and expanding our partnerships to drive meaningful health improvements in the community. This year has positioned us perfectly to achieve these ambitious goals!”



MonREN Academic Seminar (L-R): Emiko Hunt, Jordan Crawford, Chris Barton.



MonREN Network Manager, Emiko Hunt

### **TROPHI COLLABORATION: COLLABORATIVE REGISTRAR EDUCATION AND TRAINING ENHANCEMENT (CREATE)**

CREATE (Collaborative Registrar Education and Training Enhancement) has emerged from the TROPHI collaboration between The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Departments of General Practice at Monash and Melbourne Universities. TROPHI, based in Outer Eastern Melbourne, is forging strong links with key regional health services. This two year project, funded by an Education Research Grant from the RACGP, aims to use a participatory process to co-design and test innovations to optimise general practice (GP) training at two critical stages: in-hospital experience and the transition to the first GP term.

This year, we initiated the project and began a realist review of the literature to better understand and use evidence-based proposals that have improved GP training globally. We are interviewing key stakeholders involved in GP training and education to understand which components of in-hospital training were formative to their learning and professional development. The project will continue to be driven by regional needs as it aims to identify innovations that will enhance future GPs educational experience, improve learning, and support work-life balance.

### **DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL PRACTICE EDUCATION RESEARCH**

#### **Authored by: A/Prof Jennifer Neil**

Along with our usual program evaluations, several education research projects have recently been initiated in the Department, each highlighting the importance of increasing our knowledge in primary care education and contributing to a new stream of primary care education research within the Department.

Dr Nadida Kachkouche has spearheaded a project titled: “Can introducing a COIL program enhance medical students’ awareness regarding the relevance of cross-cultural communication skills in healthcare?” In 2022, the COIL program was introduced to year 1 medical couse undergraduate students at Monash University Australia and year 3 medical course students at Nagoya University Japan. The research was aimed at finding out if introducing a COIL program can enhance medical students’ awareness regarding the relevance of cross-cultural communication skills in healthcare using mixed methods study design. Quantitative and qualitative data was obtained from students’ responses to anonymous pre-COIL questionnaire and post-COIL questionnaires. Additional qualitative data was obtained from three online focus group interviews following the COIL experience.

Dr Kimberley Yew has been driving an evaluation of a novel competency based assessment introduced into the Year 4C GP program in 2023 called the Assessment for Progression Examination (APEX). The APEX is designed to evaluate students’ clinical skills within the teaching rotation. Our project - The Evaluation of GP APEX aims to explore and better understand the perspectives of key stakeholders (medical students, examiners, simulated patients and admin staff) involved in the assessment. This is a mixed method study, with data collection performed via survey as well as follow up interview. This research is currently in the final stages of data collection and moving into data analysis.

Dr Monika Cocha, an academic registrar, is working on a project that builds on A/Prof Jennifer Neil’s work in trauma-informed medical education looking at student perceptions of the teaching of sensitive topics in the medical school curriculum. The project is now well advanced in the analysis phase and will be presented at the RACGP conference GP24 in Perth.

# UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

## YEARS 1 AND 2 UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

**Authored by: Dr Nadida Kachkouche and Dr Cathy Grech**

The Department of General Practice coordinates and administers the teaching of Clinical Skills in years 1 and 2 of the Monash medicine course at Clayton campus.

The clinical skills team includes the Year 1 Clinical Skills coordinator Dr Nadida Kachkouche, the Year 2 Clinical Skills coordinator Dr Cathy Grech, the Undergraduate Administrative Officer Ms Marion Daniels and our highly esteemed clinical skills tutors.

The Clinical Skills program comprises 25% of the year 1 and Year 2 curriculum and prepares students for a smooth transition from preclinical to clinical years.

In Year 1 and 2, students learn the fundamentals of the medical interview, patient-centred history taking and physical examination skills, as well as communications skills, clinical reasoning skills and certain procedural skills.

The clinical skills team continues to develop and implement novel and innovative ways of teaching our students. Our novice students are introduced to clinical skills via the UEDIT model (Understand Explain Demonstrate Instruct Test) approach, which was developed by Nadida as a framework for teaching that acknowledges the fact that physical examination skills incorporate both professionalism and examination skills and highlights the need for a clear understanding of human anatomy and physiology which in turn leads to a better understanding of the examination findings and what they mean. Nadida also continues to collaborate with Nagoya University in Japan, on the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) Program, which allows our medical students the opportunity to discuss the challenges of cross-cultural communication and the potential impact on the doctor-patient relationship. Cathy has continued working with the MED Educational team on the podcast series “The Leap: The Classroom to the Clinic”, in which Cathy interviews specialists in the areas the students are currently studying and covers topics such as what drew the specialist to their field, what working as a specialist and student on rotation in their field is like, as well as practical tips around history taking, examination, investigations.

The clinical skills team from Clayton has also once again been working hard with our colleagues in Malaysia and Gippsland to develop authentic and reliable assessment processes across the Monash MED campuses for both written as well as practical assessments. This includes the Year 2A APEX (Assessment for Progression Examinations) which was first introduced to the MED program in 2023. The APEX is undertaken by Year 2A through to Year 5D students and involves students performing specific tasks and receiving immediate feedback on their performance by an examiner.

## Innovation in Teaching and Learning in 2024

### Introducing ‘My Cardiovascular Day’ and ‘My Surgical Day at the Hospital’.

In 2024, Nadida collaborated with several staff members from the Faculty of Medicine and introduced an innovative Learning and Teaching initiative ‘My Cardiovascular Day at the Hospital’ in semester 1 and ‘My Surgical Day at Hospital’ in semester 2. The sessions were conducted at the education precinct of the Victorian Heart Hospital and aimed at providing medical students with a simulated clinical experience to help ease their transition from preclinical to clinical years.

During the sessions, students had an opportunity to take a medical history from a simulated patient, apply clinical reasoning skills in discussing the case, participate in a simulated ward round, apply knowledge of basic sciences in a clinical context, participate in a Sim Lab activity, and work with their peers to answer relevant quiz question activities. Following the session, students had an opportunity to complete an anonymous survey designed to evaluate their perceived readiness to enter the clinical environment as well as aspects they found the most helpful.

Once again, we would like to express our gratitude to our wonderful administrator Marion Daniels and our hardworking and dedicated team of tutors. We would also like to thank our wonderful simulated and real patients and – of course- our Year 1 and 2 students, who we have so enjoyed teaching this year.

## YEAR 4C TEACHING

### Authored by: A/Prof Jennifer Neil

Now feeling very settled in the Alfred Centre, our teaching got off to a great start in 2024. Our departmental educators continue to flourish in their roles with many taking on new projects either in primary care research or in leadership of curriculum areas. We welcomed two new educators to the team this year, Dr Tian Tu and Dr Ravi Arya. Both have significant experience in education and despite only recently joining our team, they are delivering our curriculum with aplomb. We also welcomed two academic registrars to the team, Dr Monika Coha and Dr Jordan Crawford who have demonstrated such enthusiasm for teaching and their contributions have been highly valued. We thank our academic registrars for their contribution and wish them well in the future.

Students thoroughly enjoyed their GP placements, and we are so thankful to our wonderful cohort of GP supervisors who take the time to educate our doctors of the future and demonstrate to them the role of primary care in the health system. Many of these doctors have taught for Monash University for years and are very experienced in giving our Year 4C medical students a highly valuable educational encounter. I would like to thank all our supervisors for everything that they do for medical student education as without them the GP program would not be possible.

We have been on a significant GP supervisor recruitment drive, recruiting through MonREN and other departmental contacts. Dr Atish Manek and Ms Sandra Zovko have been working with the practices and GP supervisors to ensure that they have all the information they need to be able to educate Monash University medical students and to ensure that both supervisors and practices are appropriately accredited. This process is quite time-consuming and involves a large amount of correspondence both internally within the University and also with practices. I am thankful to Dr Manek and Ms Zovko for all their hard work.

Dr Kimberley Yew has spear headed the assessment processes this year and our written paper and OSCE stations were developed very smoothly and collaboratively. A significant change in assessment is occurring next year with a history/management APEx taking place of the end of year OSCE. A lot of planning has gone into this new assessment and Dr Yew has been ensuring that the transition will be smooth and organised.

I'd like to thank our invited speakers who have been teaching for us in 2024, some of whom have taught for us for many years. These speakers include Dr Thomas Dickson, Prof Greg Goodman, A/Prof Geoff Sussman, A/Prof Abigail Tenen, Dr Shishir Magwa, Dr Ronald Shweitzer, Dr Libby Jamieson, Emeritus Prof Leon Piterman, and the disability team from Centre for Development Disability Health. I would particularly like to thank Dr Magwa and Dr Jamieson who have finished their teaching roles for their contributions into the medical course and for inspiring so many medical students in their GP rotation.

We continue to work with the GP students' network (GPSN) and I had the privilege of joining them at a GPSN clinical skills event day at the University of Melbourne involving GPSN students from Monash University, University of Melbourne, Deakin University and the University of Tasmania. I led an ophthalmology clinical skills station whilst others led ultrasound and ENT stations. I also attended the GPSN careers night where an enthusiastic group of medical students heard about the many different paths a GP could take as well as eating excellent banh mi!

I have had several meetings with students from the diversity and inclusion committee from MUMUS. Together we have committed to ensuring that the teaching environment is trauma-informed, and the students are working with us to include a diversity statement for our GP supervisor handbooks. We are also looking at ways of collaborating to increase diversity in the case studies used in GP departmental teaching.

Academic registrar, Dr Monika Coha, has been undertaking a research project looking at student perceptions of psychological safety in the teaching of sensitive topics in the Monash medical degree. This builds on previous work undertaken in our department and will continue to inform a trauma-informed medical education approach to teaching which has been and continues to be implemented in our GP teaching program. Trauma-informed medical education aims to ensure a physically and psychologically safe learning environment so that learners can optimise their learning. This means that when they face similar cases as clinicians, they will be better prepared to handle them, both psychologically for themselves but also in terms of patient outcomes.

We look forward to continuing the year 4C program in 2025 with a growing number of students as the teaching team continue to build upon and refine a curriculum and assessment program which student's hold in high regard according to their end of rotation feedback.

# YEAR 5D

Authored by: [Dr Atish Manek](#)

## MED5101 SCHOLARLY INTENSIVE PLACEMENTS

Scholarly Intensive Placements (SIP) with the DGP provide an opportunity for students to engage in scholarly work either supervised by a world-leading DGP Research Team (Research SIP) or a Community General Practitioner (Professional SIP). The DGP was excited to continue its involvement with the SIP program and proposed varied and enticing placements for students to undertake in 2024.

Some examples of 2024 DGP Professional SIPs included; “Sociodemographic factors affecting HbA1c control in patients with type 2 diabetes” & “The Role of General Practice in the Implementation of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program: Participation Rates and Adherence to Colonoscopy Post Positive Faecal Occult Blood Test”. While students benefited through scholarly and clinical work, practices and their patients benefited by having data analysed and presented for service improvement and / or delivery of patient education material. A special thank you is extended to participating General Practice Supervisors.

The 2024 DGP Research SIPs were of equally high quality and variety. Examples included; “The role of primary care services and general practice in the prevention and cessation of e-cigarette use”, & “General Practice training strategies to improve quality of care: A Realist Review”. The high quality of 2024 DGP Research SIPs will enable a number of students to be named as authors on subsequent publications. We look forward to reporting on the continuing success of DGP Scholarly Intensive Placements in 2025.

## COMMUNITY PILOT

We continued the pilot programme in 2024, with the aim of attracting more medical students to select general practice as a future career choice. Yr 5D students ‘opted-in’ to complete a 6 week ‘speciality rotation’ in the community. The students spent time across a variety of settings including traditional general practice / in a RACF supervised by a GP / in an outpatient clinic dedicated to Aboriginal children who are at risk of entering or are in out-of-home care. We hope the students (and their supervisors) will benefit from patient contact across different settings, and appreciate the challenges this brings.

We hope to be able to offer the same experience for 2025.

# GPSN ANNUAL REVIEW

The GPSN Monash Committee has experienced a remarkable year marked by numerous events and significant milestones, furthering our commitment to advocating for a career in General Practice (GP) amongst Monash medical students and enhancing educational opportunities.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR YEAR

One of the standout events was the GPSN Careers Night, which featured an impressive lineup of five distinguished speakers who shared invaluable insights into the diverse pathways and professional development within GP. Our esteemed speakers included Dr. Umair Masood, Dr. Daniel Castellana, Dr. Cecilia Xiao, Dr. Harishan Tharmarajah, and A/Prof. Jennifer Neil, Head of Monash GP Education. The event attracted students from all year levels, with a notable presence of fourth and fifth-year students. The Q&A segment was particularly engaging, generating numerous inquiries through our online platform. The positive feedback from attendees was overwhelming, inspiring us to continue hosting this event to raise awareness about careers in GP.

## FOCUS ON FOURTH-YEAR STUDENTS

Recognizing that the fourth year at Monash Medical School is pivotal for GP curriculum engagement, we organized two major events for our 4C students. The first was the 4C Clinical Skills Night, held earlier this year, which focused on hands-on skills such as otoscopy, breast examination, CST, fundoscopy, and DRE examinations. We are proud to have conducted this event in Clayton and across the major rural clinical sites, including Bendigo and Traralgon. Additionally, our recent 4C OSCE Practice Night in September garnered significant interest, resulting in a waiting list due to overwhelming registrations. This event, a collaboration with the Queer Health Collective (QHC), included two stations that were well received by students preparing for upcoming exams.

Earlier in the year, we also released a comprehensive exam question package for fourth-year students, which has seen great engagement and has been widely utilized as they prepare for their final exams.

## ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

In addition to these key events, we successfully organized Orientation Week, the State-wide Introduction to Ultrasound event, and are planning the upcoming Preclinical APEX Night. We are also facilitating a series of revision lectures and an MCQ day specifically for the 4C cohort. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the faculty and our sponsor, RACGP, for their support, which enables us to provide such informative and educational resources to Monash medical students.

As we reflect on our accomplishments, we remain dedicated to fostering a vibrant learning environment that encourages exploration into the field of General Practice.



## REGISTRARS



**Dr Jordan Crawford**

*What are the experiences of Australian General Practitioners in providing end-of-life care services within residential aged-care facilities?"*

Dr Atish Manek  
Prof Grant Russell

I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to undertake an Academic Post through RACGP this year. As part of my role, I have been working within the DGP part-time, in both a teaching and research capacity. I have also continued my clinical training part-time alongside this.

My research project aims to explore how GPs experience provision of end-of-life care in the residential aged care facility (RACF) setting. We hope to identify examples of barriers and opportunities faced by GPs in provision of end-of-life care services, as well as potential areas for future service optimisation.

I have embraced the opportunity to present my work at both AAAPC and ANZSPM conferences so far this year. As part of my work within the DGP I have had the chance to be a member of both the Sustainability & Wellbeing Committee and the MonREN Steering Group Committee. I have also presented as part of the MonREN Journal Club series.



**Dr Monika Coha**

*How do medical students perceive their psychological safety in the teaching of sensitive topics in a medical school curriculum?*

A/Prof Jennifer Neil  
A/Prof Chris Barton  
A/Prof Arunaz Kumar

The RACGP Academic Post has been a fantastic way to explore a career in Academic General Practice.

This year I have been working part-time clinically in the General Practice setting, and part-time in teaching and medical education research.

My project adds to the field of medical education research, and explores medical students' psychological safety in the teaching of sensitive topics such as family violence and mental health. Medical students are exposed to sensitive clinical presentations throughout their training, and therefore teaching on these topics is important in the medical curriculum. Teaching sensitive topics poses a risk to students of re-traumatisation, and therefore understanding how current teaching practices may impact medical student wellbeing and psychological safety is imperative.

Through qualitative, semi-structured interviews of Monash penultimate and final year medical students, we have been gaining insights into which teaching techniques are supportive of medical student psychological safety and well-being. These techniques show some alignment with trauma-informed medical education principles. Insight into how students perceive and engage with sensitive topic teaching can be used to shape the medical curriculum to be more effective in adequately preparing students for managing sensitive presentations in the workforce, including General Practice where exposure to such presentations is common.



ANZSPM Jordan



AAAPC Monika + Jordan

# TEACHING STAFF

## YEAR 1 & 2

### Program Coordinators

- Dr Cathy Grech
- Dr Nadida Kachkouche

### Administrator

- Ms Marion Daniels

### Tutors

- Dr Julian Dart
- Dr Danielle Dowman
- Dr Buddy Reid

- Dr Robyn Ridgway
- Dr Ella Rose
- Dr Chathuri Siriwardene
- Dr Harishan Tharmarajah
- Dr Dallas Smith
- Dr Sally Abromwich
- Dr Laxman Tharmarajah
- Ms Jacquie Wise
- Dr Simon Wong
- Dr Caitlin Harrison
- Dr Anu Achar
- Dr Laxmi Iyengar

- Dr Marion Tissera
- Dr Angela Dougall
- Dr Sheila Manmathan
- Dr Cheryl Oh
- Dr Rif Syeda
- Dr Phil Perlstein
- Dr Jen Moon
- Dr Sharmini Kumar

## YEAR 4C STAFF

### Curriculum and Assessment Lead

- A/Prof Jennifer Neil

### Professors

- Prof Grant Russell

### Senior Lecturers

- Dr Atish Manek
- Dr Phil Feren
- Dr Jagdeesh Dhaliwal
- Dr Ravi Arya

### Lecturers

- Dr Kimberley Yew
- Dr Claire Denness
- Dr Pradeep Vijayanand
- Dr Allara Walsh-Howe
- Dr Anu Achar
- Dr Harishan Tharmarajah
- Dr Tian Tu

### Clinical Site Administrators

- Ms Sandra Zovko
- Ms Sarah Budhiwianto

### Regular sessional staff

- Dr Paki Rizakis
- Dr Leslie Segal

### Academic Registrars

- Jordan Crawford
- Monika Coha

### Additional teaching staff

- Dr Ronald Schweitzer
- Dr David Oberklaid

### Guest lecturers

- Prof Danielle Mazza AM
- Prof Leon Piterman
- Prof Geoff Sussman OAM
- Prof Greg Goodman AM
- A/Prof Abi Tenen
- A/Prof Michael Storr
- Dr Thomas Dickson
- Dr Ron Schweitzer
- Dr Megan Stewart
- Ms Heather Miller
- Dr Cathy Grech
- Ms Michelle Templeton
- Dr Libby Jamieson
- Ms Kate Gledhill
- Dr Shish Malgwa
- Ms Jagjit Manek

# SUMMER AND WINTER SCHOLARS 2024

The vacation scholars program provides an opportunity for students to spend time during the summer and winter academic break to work with research teams within the department on a research project. They aim to provide students with an experience in primary care research, insight into future opportunities for research in the department, and encourage students to pursue a career in research or academia.

Our summer and winter scholar program continues to attract large numbers of high quality students with an interest in primary care research. Due to capacity issues we have had to take fewer students in 2024, but moving forward we will increase our student intake closer to previous numbers.

## Summer Scholars

Lavina Rao

Manjeers Ramadas

Minh Thien

## Winter Scholars

Elsa Ibanez Prada

Caroline Filiex

Elsa's experience: During my time as a Winter Scholar in the Department, I had the opportunity to engage deeply with ongoing projects while enrolled in the Master of Clinical Research at the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Monash University. I participated in The Translating Research Outcomes into the Primary Health Interface (TROPHI), focusing on the local government areas of Knox, Maroondah, and Yarra Ranges in Outer Eastern Melbourne. My role involved conducting a comprehensive review of health and wellbeing plans, PHN strategic plans, annual reports, statements of priorities, and needs assessments for the region. Through this work, we identified several key priorities and promising solutions for enhancing primary care services, supporting the community, and improving partnerships and integration. The experience in the department was incredibly welcoming, allowing me to gain valuable insights and skills in the field. I am extremely thankful to be part of this incredible team.



# B PUB HEALTH RES STUDENTS



*Improving Identification and responSe to ReProductive coerclon and abuse in GeneRal PracticE (INSPIRE)*

*Kristy Chung (left) with supervisor Susan Saldanha (right)*



*Understanding Vaping Intention of Monash University International Students*

*Derek Villaceran (right) with supervisor A/Prof Chris Barton (left)*

## HONOURS STUDENTS



**Tasneem Kamoni**

***Health information needs of university students regarding e-cigarette use: a quantitative comparison of domestic and international students***

Supervised by: A/Prof Chris Barton and Melis Selamoglu

My honours research involved a survey study to determine the prevalence of e-cigarette use at Monash University by students and their health information needs.

Our findings revealed significant concerns about e-cigarette use in the student community and highlighted the need to better understand how international students access and interpret e-cigarette health information.

This research was instrumental in understanding the specific health information needs of young adults and devising strategies to effectively communicate the risks associated with e-cigarette use.



**Keya Bibikar**

***Impact of stigma and alexithymia on doctor-patient communication among people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)***

Supervised by A/Prof Chris Barton and Dr Sanduni Madawala

My honours research project was a quantitative survey-based cross-sectional study. We explored the relationship between stigma and alexithymia, a psychological cognitive-affective trait linked with a difficulty to recognise and distinguish emotions. We investigated how this relationship impacts satisfaction with communication in general practice settings.

Our findings indicated that the relationship between alexithymia and anticipated stigma was mediated by satisfaction with social support. People who had higher levels of alexithymia were less satisfied with their social support, leading to stronger feelings of anticipated stigma. Subsequently, resulting in less satisfaction with communication with healthcare providers.



**Kira Percival-Cobb**

***Supporting endometriosis diagnosis and management in general practice: what HealthPathways exist?***

Supervised by Dr Sharinne Crawford, Prof Danielle Mazza AM, and Dr Alissia Kost.

My honours research project was a mixed method study. First we conducted a quantitative content analysis to examine the endometriosis recommendations provided by HealthPathways. Qualitative interviews were then conducted with Australian general practitioners to explore their experiences when using HealthPathways for their patients with

endometriosis. The findings from this study revealed that whilst some HealthPathways provide adequate recommendations there were several inconsistencies. Furthermore, we found that most general practitioners are not utilising HealthPathways when treating endometriosis patients. In identifying these limitations, we proposed several methods to improve the Australian HealthPathways and increase general practitioners' implementation.



**Kimberley Moss**

***What is the acceptability and feasibility of non-medical co-located women's health services in community pharmacy?***

Supervised by Dr Anisa Assifi and Dr Sharon James

My honours research was a qualitative-descriptive study involving semi-structured interviews with community pharmacists, nurses, general practitioners and other allied health professionals. The perspectives gathered from these interviews were used to investigate the potential benefits and challenges of integrating non-medical women's health services within community pharmacy. Our findings aim to inform future models of healthcare to enhance women's healthcare delivery in community pharmacy settings.



**Farhan Rahadiansyah**

***Understanding vaping intention of Monash University international students and opportunity for health promotion to stop vaping***

Supervised by A/Prof Chris Barton and Melis Selamoglu

My Honours research was a qualitative-descriptive study incorporating focus groups with international students and interviews with clinical and service staff members at the University Health Services (UHS) and Monash University International Student Services (MUISS).

The results were used to gain opinions regarding the needs and preferences of Monash University international students in receiving health information about vaping and construct a strategy to distribute health promotion messages on e-cigarettes for these students.

## MASTERS STUDENTS



**Aly Pearce**

***An e-cigarette prevention social marketing health promotion campaign targeting Australian University students aged between 18-25 years of age.***

Supervisors: A/Prof Chris Barton and Holly Wild

E-cigarette use is a concerning public health issue, particularly affecting adolescents and young adults. This project aligns with the Vic Health unCloud collective impact campaign, through an industry engagement activity with Master of Public Health students. The project aims to analyse health promotion messaging that appeals to undergraduate students aged 18-25 years. Methods include a literature review, and targeted focus groups with undergraduate students. Using this evidence, the project will create a video featuring brief interviews with Monash University students, using a vox pop style. The video resource will be displayed at key sites at Monash University campuses, and aims to decrease vaping prevalence among students through peer-to-peer messaging. It will engage the audience with personal stories, relevant warnings, and a referral pathway to the University Health Service.



**Charlotte Kwok**

***Modifiable and Non-Modifiable factors of increased pain related to insertion of Contraceptive Intrauterine Device: findings from the 2024 Australian National Women's Health Survey.***

Supervisor: Dr Vera Costa

This project involves a secondary analysis of the 2024 National Women's Health Survey to investigate factors associated with pain during intrauterine device (IUD) insertion in Australia, where relevant studies are limited. It examines both non-modifiable factors (such as age, gravidity, and mental health conditions) and modifiable factors (such as perceptions of contraception and IUD knowledge) among participants. The study aims to identify associations between these factors and pain levels during IUD insertion. The findings could help healthcare providers improve patient care and address modifiable factors, enhancing the IUD insertion experience in Australian healthcare settings.

## PHD STUDENTS



**Alissia Kost**

Prof Danielle Mazza AM  
Dr Sharinne Crawford

***Improving utilisation of long-acting reversible contraception as a hormonal treatment for endometriosis in Australian primary care.***

This project will focus on long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) as a hormonal treatment for endometriosis in Australian primary care. LARC uptake in Australia is very low, compared to international benchmarks. This study seeks to better understand why it is not being better utilised in the treatment of endometriosis, and to develop an intervention to address this. The project will begin with a systematic review of the efficacy of LARC in the management of endometriosis. Subsequent mixed methods studies including quantitative, qualitative and co-design analyses will be conducted to inform the development of the intervention.



**Georgia Webb**

Dr Riki Lane  
A/Prof Chris Barton

***Differential outcomes for Trans, Gender Diverse and Non-Binary individuals seeking Hormone Therapy***

This project focuses on the various healthcare pathways available to transgender people wishing to undergo gender affirming hormone therapy. The project is utilising a mixed-methods approach, creating a cohort of hormone therapy clients to analyse what factors lead to better personal outcomes after initiation of hormones, and interviewing clients from the cohort to understand their personal journeys whilst in the system. Factors being investigated include: anxiety, depression and quality of life.



### Jeana Wong

Prof Danielle Mazza AM  
Dr Jessica Botfield  
Dr Noushin Arefadib

#### ***Understanding the impacts of a nurse-led model of contraceptive and abortion care in rural and regional general practice***

My PhD studies will form part of the process evaluation of the ORIENT Trial, which aims to improve access to long-acting reversible contraception and medical abortion for women living in regional and rural areas through a nurse-led model of care. My first study has been a systematic review evaluating the impact of primary care nurse and midwife delivered interventions on access to contraception and abortion care. My other studies will use the principles of realist evaluation to understand “what worked, for whom, and why” in the ORIENT Trial. I am mostly using qualitative research methods and gathering data from women and clinicians through semi-structured interviews.



### Susan Saldhana

Prof Danielle Mazza AM  
Dr Jessica Botfield

#### ***Assessing the risk factors and health consequences of reproductive coercion in Australian general practice***

Susan joined the Department of General Practice and SPHERE in 2022 as a PhD candidate. Susan’s research aims to understand who is at greater risk of experiencing reproductive coercion (pregnancy coercion, contraception sabotage, coerced abortion, forced sterilisation etc.), how it impacts on an individual’s health, and how it manifests in general practice. The findings of her PhD will provide insight and guidance for general practitioners to better identify and support individuals who have or are currently experiencing reproductive coercion.



### Tesfaye Mekonnen

Prof Grant Russell  
Dr Michael Di Donato  
Prof Alex Collie

#### ***Timing of healthcare service utilisation and its association with outcomes in workers and compensable musculoskeletal injuries***

Timely and evidence-based care for musculoskeletal injuries have been shown to optimise patient outcomes. However, due to the adversarial and complex nature of the injured worker’s experience within the workers’ compensation (WC) system, this may not always happen. This PhD project aims to explore the factors associated with the timing of care and its impact on outcomes for patients filing claims for musculoskeletal injuries within WC schemes. The research follows a pragmatic paradigm, starting with a scoping review, followed by an in-depth analysis of retrospective data from various jurisdictions. The study contributes to strategies for ensuring timely, accessible and high-quality care delivery.



### Claire Hutton

A/Prof Chris Barton  
Dr Penny Round

#### ***The challenges of providing care to fellow doctors***

Claire’s PhD focuses on doctors who provide care for their colleagues, looking at the challenges involved when your patient is also a doctor. I completed my mid-candidature milestone in August 2023, and have so far completed a scoping review of the literature, and a grounded theory study, interviewing GPs about their experiences when treating doctor-patients.

## PHD COMPLETIONS

In 2024 we celebrated 5 PhD completions. This is the single largest number of students completing their doctorate from the department in a year and a testament to the research capacity building initiatives introduced within the department over the past decade. We wish our graduate students the best of luck as they forge their careers and become the primary care research leaders of tomorrow.



**Jessica Moulton**

Prof Danielle Mazza AM  
Dr Jessica Botfield  
Dr Noushin Arefadib

***Co-designing a nurse-led model of care to increase access to long-acting reversible contraception and medication abortion in rural and regional general practice***

August 2024

Jess' thesis explored concepts of universal access to abortion and contraception care. Barriers to equitable care persist in Australia, particularly in rural and regional areas and her research investigated nurse-led models of care as a solution for healthcare barriers and workforce shortages that could increase access to these essential services in primary care. She found that nurse-led care is one strategy for improving access to sexual and reproductive health for people in rural and regional Australia, however accessible training and supportive funding mechanisms are essential if models with nurses are to be feasible and effective.



**Melis Selamoglu**

A/Prof Chris Barton  
Prof Bircan Erbas

***General practitioners' perceptions of e-cigarettes as a smoking cessation aid: Implications for policy and practice***

August 2024

Melis' thesis involved a series of mixed method studies undertaken in Australia, Turkey, and the United Kingdom to investigate and understand the intentions of general practitioners to prescribe or recommend to their patients nicotine containing e-liquid for smoking cessation. Melis published multiple papers from her thesis and presented her research findings extensively including at a number of international conferences including the Society of Academic Primary Care annual conference and the European Respiratory Society meeting. During her candidature she was an international visiting scholar at Kings College in London and at Istanbul University in Turkey.



**Nishadi Withanage**

Prof Danielle Mazza AM  
Dr Jessica Botfield  
Dr Sharon James  
Prof Kirsten Black

***Optimising the provision of preconception care in Australian general practice: leveraging systems and providers***

July 2024

Nishadi undertook her doctoral research within SPHERE CRE to investigate preconception care (PCC) interventions targeting medical and lifestyle risk factors to enhance patient health knowledge and reduce adverse pregnancy outcomes. The three key findings from her PhD were: (1) General practices can play a key role in identifying patients for PCC provision in Australia (2) Improving general practice EMR software would assist in identifying and inviting patients who may most benefit from PCC, and (3) PCC invitations sent through general practices should emphasise improving women's holistic health and account for provider and consumer sensitivities.



**Areni Altun**

Prof Grant Russell  
A/Prof Liz Sturgiss  
Dr Helen Brown

***Improving access to healthcare for refugee women living with chronic pain***

July 2024

Areni's thesis involved mixed methods research that explored factors that influence access to quality health care for refugee women living with chronic pain in Australia. Her enquiry provided greater insight into the delivery of culturally sensitive care to facilitate positive health outcomes for vulnerable populations.



**Philippa Buckingham**

Prof Danielle Mazza AM  
Dr. Safeera Hussainy

***Contraceptive counselling in community pharmacy: an opportunity to advance equitable contraceptive care***

May 2024

Pip's research, conducted within the SPHERE Centre of Research Excellence, was focused on understanding how community pharmacists' roles could be enhanced or extended, to address contraceptive care service provision gaps in the primary care system. Pip's research interests include contraception and abortion, person-centred care, LGBTQA+ health and wellbeing and gender-affirming care.

# VISITING SCHOLARS

## Katelyn Battad

This year I was fortunate to join the Department of General Practice as a visiting scholar from McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Under the supervision of Prof Grant Russell, I was able to embark on a research project centred on access to primary care as part of my Master's coursework. More specifically, we sought to operationalise a conceptual framework of access to healthcare that was first described in a collaboration between Drs. Jean-Frederic Levesque, Mark Harris and Grant Russell in 2013. My research involved a review of instruments currently used to assess access to primary care with the goal of compiling a list of optimal tools for use in this field. Our project is ongoing, but we hope that our findings will help improve access to primary care by facilitating a more comprehensive measurement of the many barriers to care.

My time in the Department of General Practice provided valuable insights into the Australian health system and various approaches to public health issues. I am grateful for the experience and look forward to bringing the lessons learned through my colleagues at Monash to my practice of public health in Canada.



## Laraib Mazhar, Penn State University, USA

Visiting from Penn State University in Hershey Pennsylvania, Laraib spent the (northern hemisphere) summer doing a placement unit as part of her Doctor of Public Health program with the DGP, working with A/Prof Chris Barton and Melis Selamoglu on a perspective piece about Australia's prescription model for e-cigarettes.



**Dr Malcolm Moffat, Honorary Consultant in Public Health and PhD candidate at Newcastle University, United Kingdom**

As part of his doctoral fellowship, Dr Moffat spent six weeks with SPHERE CRE to establish collaborations and contribute to current research on postpartum contraception with Dr Jessica Botfield.



*Left: A/Prof Rebecca French, Right: Prof Danielle Mazza AM*

**A/Prof Rebecca French, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London, United Kingdom**

Visiting from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London, United Kingdom A/Prof Rebecca French spent one week with SPHERE CRE. During her time with SPHERE, she conducted a webinar on 'What is shaping reproductive health and well-being in Britain?'. She also used her time to liaise with SPHERE's research fellows, learn about their work and how she can assist them in their research.

**Rebecka Evans**

Rebecka is a visiting international scholar who will be working with the DGP in November-December 2024. Her dissertation topic is : Experiences of Trans and Gender Diverse Youth in Primary Care Settings in US and Australia.

Rebecka has worked with TGD youth in her experience as a paediatric and psychiatric Nurse Practitioner and as a research assistant for more than 10 years.

Whilst in Australia, Rebecka will be recruiting and conducting interviews with transgender and gender diverse youth (ages 18 to 24 years) to gain an understanding of the experiences in primary care settings.

## GRADUATE RESEARCH GROUP (GRG)

Authored by: Ms Jeana Wong

In 2024, the GRG has been chaired by PhD student Jeana Wong and supported by A/Prof Chris Barton. This year, we have had 5 rotations of SIP students, 5 Honours students, 2 Masters students, 11 PhD students, and 2 GP registrars participate in GRG activities. The GRG has hosted fortnightly meetings involving short seminars on research methods and skills and provided opportunities for students to practice and receive feedback on presentations, and discuss their research projects. Providing a supportive and welcoming social environment is also a key part of the GRG, and the group hosts a casual coffee catch up prior to the meetings.

One of the most exciting developments for the GRG has been this year's group research project - Peer-led research capacity building: the role of mind-lines, heart-lines and the out of line. Analysis and write up for this project are still in progress

Finally, we held PhD conferral celebration events for Dr Pip Buckingham, Dr Karen Price, and Dr Areni Altun.

## MEDIA AND MARKETING COMMITTEE

Authored by: A/Prof Chris Barton

The Media and Marketing committee took a different approach this year to our work within the department, adopting a task-oriented approach rather than holding regular meetings.

Department programs and activities were advertised at events such as:

- RACGP Academic Post registrar Victorian registrars information webinar,
- BMedSc Honours information night
- The Alfred Precinct Honours Information night.

This year, we bid farewell to Twitter (X) as a social media platform to promote the department's activities. We will investigate other social media platforms to share the work of the department - watch this space!

Each year, one of the big tasks for the Committee is the production of the Annual Report. I would like to thank all the staff and students who have contributed to the report this year. In particular, I'd like to thank Claudia Morando-Stokoe and Levina Rahardjo for their support with putting the 2024 Annual Report together.

## PROJECT MANAGERS GROUP REPORT

Authored by: Dr Karen Nolidin and Dr Vera Costa

The Project Manager's group is co-facilitated by Dr Karen Nolidin and Dr Vera Costa, with members from across the many research projects of the DGP. The group meets every six weeks in hybrid sessions (in person and via Zoom) and aims to connect project staff, break down barriers, and share information about what is happening in other projects. The group was initiated by the DGP Research Committee in 2020 and welcomes any staff in the Department who work on and manage projects. The group can feed back issues and requests to the Committee when required. Members have also benefited from sharing resources, skills and information and offering help, advice and contacts. Discussion topics have included employing new staff and associated HR issues, increasing recruitment success, interview transcription options, writing resources, online tools and resources, and use of evaluation frameworks. We also discuss project management training, software, resources and related professional development opportunities.



## RESEARCH COMMITTEE

### Authored by: Prof Grant Russell and Georgia Webb

The Research Committee meets monthly and focusses on promoting and supporting the research activities across the Department of General Practice. We oversee the activities of the Department's Graduate Research Group (GRG) and receive regular reports from members who sit on School research committees.

The Research Committee works closely with the GRG to support the graduate students in the department. We advise on curriculum, support celebration events for PhD graduates, and foster reflection on GRG activities. A member of the GRG (this year Georgia Webb) acts as the Committee's Secretariat each year.

In 2024, in association with MonREN, the Department's Practice Based Research Network, the committee launched a Journal Club. The Journal Club was open to members of the Department and clinician members of MonREN. We had a range of presentations: Dr Sharon James spoke on an intervention that used practice nurses to optimise the management of hypertension, Dr Jordan Crawford, one of our 2024 RACGP academic registrars, examined a paper on afterhours telehealth in Australian residential aged care facilities, while our Director of Education A/Prof Jenny Neil presented on health impairment allegations against doctors.

Fraudulent completion of online surveys by bots is an increasing challenge to researchers, and is beginning to impact student research work. We have prepared a paper on safeguards that describes different fraud mitigation techniques that researchers can use in this increasingly complex world.

Finally, and importantly, the committee awards a Departmental member an opportunity to participate in TUTOR-PHC - a one-year, international, interdisciplinary research capacity building program. TUTOR-PHC has been accepting a candidate from the Department of General Practice for the last 7 years. Awardees join other early career researchers from family medicine, nursing, psychology and many other primary care disciplines for a year long course complemented by a residential week long workshop at the University of Western Ontario in Canada. Dr Anisa Assifi was the successful awardee for 2024, Research Committee members: Prof Grant Russell (Chair) A/Prof Chris Barton, A/Prof Jenny Neil, Dr Anisa Assifi, Dr Vera Costa, Dr Sharon James, Jeanna Wong, Dr Sharinne Crawford, Dr Maria De Leon-Santiago, Georgia Webb

## SOCIAL COMMITTEE

### Authored by: Dr Atish Manek

The Department of General Practice (DGP) Social Committee continued to meet frequently throughout 2024. This year's members included Dr Atish Manek, Dr Maria de Leon-Santiago, Claudia Morando-Stokoe, Jeana Wong, Jessire Zeng, Sangita Chakraborty, Dr Yi Ling Low, Mae Rilloraza, Tesfaye Mekonnen and Dr Satish Melwani. Together, the committee has kept the DGP socially engaged during 2024.

2024 kicked off with the ever-popular International Lunch. Staff prepared and shared a meal with their colleagues. Similar to previous years, it was an enjoyable event where there was no shortage of delicious flavours and smiles shared.

In quick succession, we hosted the 'biggest morning tea', raising money on behalf of the Cancer Council.

At the time of writing, the Social Committee is in the process of raising funds for September, & preparing for our second International Lunch. We also have a keen eye on the end of year festivities. We look forward to celebrating with you soon!!



# SUSTAINABILITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Authored by: Dr Nadida Kachkouche, Mrs Sandra Zovko, Ms Levina Rahardjo, Dr Joly Kwek, Dr Anisa Assifi, Ms Elizabeth Lehman, Dr Jordan Crawford and Ms Keya Bibikar

In line with Monash University's commitments to driving sustainable change, the Department of General Practice (DGP) is dedicated to being a sustainable organisation and recognises the need to embed sustainable practices throughout its operations including teaching, research and others.

The committee's main goals in 2024 included:

- Zero Hunger;
- Good Health and Wellbeing for the DGP Staff;
- Responsible Consumption and Production.

The Committee Members collaborate and meet up regularly to ensure broad engagement and commitments from the department's staff members to share sustainability goals and use education as a key tool. These education tools include presentations, sharing tips on reducing waste as well as tips on stretching activities that can be performed regularly whilst working at a desk.

The Committee's initiatives in 2024 included:

- Organising a non-perishable food donation to Sacred Heart Mission;
- The Coffee Card Initiative - A campaign to encourage staff and students to acknowledge efforts;
- Organising the 'Fit for Work clothing donation' - a charity organisation that helps women experiencing disadvantage to get to work, keep work and navigate their world of work;
- Organising the collection of donations from DGP Staff and students to contribute to 'Share the Dignity' - a charity which collects hundreds of thousands of period products through collection drives and campaigns and distributes these products to charities;
- Wellbeing group walks every Wednesday;
- STEPtember - a global health and wellness fundraising event supporting life-changing cerebral palsy research.



# EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Authored by: Dr Jennifer Neil

In 2024, the inaugural departmental education committee meeting was held. The education committee has been established to:

- To promote excellence in education and scholarship within the department
- To advise the Department of General Practice (DGP) Senior Management Team on matters relating to education
- To oversee and advise on the implementation of the education relevant aspects of the departmental strategic plan

The DGPs education committee's objective is to oversee the development and implementation of curriculum, assessment

and scholarship of general practice and clinical skills education in the Department with the aim of promoting and enhancing the vocation of general practice.

As the DGP teaches into years 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the medical degree, we have significant influence in Monash medical school education. Members of the committee can share ideas relating to curriculum, assessments, awards, grants and primary care medical education research. Primary care medical education research has increased significantly within the department over the last 12 months and it is exciting to see this important and valuable stream of research beginning to have influence within the Monash Medical School and School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine.

## DGP ACADEMIC SEMINARS

**Authored by: Dr Kimberley Yew, Dr Anisa Assifi, Levina Rahardjo, Melis Selamoglu, Sarah Budhiwianto**

The Department of General Practice hosts weekly academic seminars featuring leading experts in the areas of research, education and policy. The seminars cover a variety of topics pertaining to primary care. We aim to provide a range of presenters relevant to education as well as current research interests. During the year we hosted a range of distinguished local and international speakers.

The Department would like to thank the 2024 Academic Seminar Coordinators, Dr Kimberley Yew, Dr Anisa Assifi, Levina Rahardjo, Melis Selamoglu and Sarah Budhiwianto, for the organisation of this important program.



*Academic Seminar 11th Sept 2024, presented by A/Prof Chris Moran*

# FAREWELLS

## Ms Mia Taylor

Mia joined the Department of General Practice in 2022 as the SPHERE Senior Marketing and Communications Coordinator. She was instrumental in the development of the initial SPHERE communications strategy and the rebuild of the SPHERE website to ensure that it showcases the objectives and achievements of SPHERE to a broad audience. We are grateful for her ideas and contributions towards enhancing the impact and translation of SPHERE's research activities and wish her all the best for the future.



## Dr Noushin Arefadib

Dr. Arefadib, joined the Department of General Practice in June 2023 as a research fellow and project manager for the ORIENT Trial as part of SPHERE CRE. Her extensive experience in public health research and policy, especially in supporting vulnerable women and children, has greatly benefited our team.

We wish her all the best in her future endeavours and thank her for her valuable contributions.



## Ms Jessie Zeng

Jessie joined the Department of General Practice in 2022 as a research officer for SPHERE CRE. During her time with us, she heavily contributed to the ORIENT Trial and the EXTEND-PREFER project. With a Masters of Public Health specialising in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Jessie has been a

valuable asset to our team. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours and thank her for her contributions.



## Dr Yi Ling Low

We bid farewell to Dr. Low, who joined the Department of General Practice in late 2022 as a Research Fellow for the ALLIANCE Trial within SPHERE CRE. Her dedication to ensuring the trial's successful implementation has been invaluable. Dr. Low, who earned her PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences from

Monash in 2023, brought a strong background in pharmacology to her team. Her passion for both fundamental science and women's health has greatly enriched our work. She was also an invaluable member of the social committee, where she organised a number of social events for the department. We thank her for her contributions and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.



## Dr Maryam Moradi

We bid farewell to Dr. Maryam Moradi, who joined the Department of General Practice in 2023 as a Senior Research Fellow within SPHERE CRE. Dr Moradi contributed significantly to the development of an Endometriosis Management Plan aimed at improving primary care for patients with endometriosis and pelvic pain. With

a PhD from the Australian National University, her expertise has been invaluable to our team. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.



## Dr Sonia Srinivasan

We bid farewell to Dr. Sonia Srinivasan, who left the department in August. Dr Srinivasan joined the Department of General Practice in 2023 as a Research Fellow and Project Manager of the AusCAPPS Network at SPHERE CRE. Sonia's dedication to health equity, particularly in improving women's access

to contraception and abortion, will be greatly missed. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours and in her pregnancy.



## Dr Chavy Arora

Chavy farewells us to take up a position in clinical practice with her partner out in Bendigo. Chavy first joined the department as an Academic Post registrar in 2022. She was then successful in gaining a role with the education team teaching into the 4th year of the medical program. Chavy was

successful in gaining funding from the RACGP Foundation to continue her research beyond her academic post to understand clinician perspectives of misinformation online and how it affects the patient-clinician relationship. This expanded on her registrar research to understand clinician perspectives on using "Doctor Google", and how this influences the patient-clinician relationship. Chavy will continue her relationship with the department as an Adjunct Research Fellow and continues to be involved in a number of projects across the department.

# CONFERENCES

## AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR ACADEMIC PRIMARY CARE (AAAPC) ANNUAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE REPORT

The 2024 AAAPC Conference was held at Western Sydney University from August 15 – August 16 2024. The event was attended by researchers, advocates, health professionals and stakeholders committed to advancing academic primary care in Australia.

The Department of General Practice was well-represented with impactful presentations, sparking meaningful discussions and reinforcing commitment to advancing academic primary care.

Department of General Practice staff and students who presented at the conference include Prof Grant Russell, A/Prof Jenny Neil, Dr Sharinne Crawford, Dr Karen Nolidin, Dr Vera Costa, Dr Jordan Crawford, Dr Monika Cocha, Dr Anisa Assifi, Dr Sharon James, Kira Percival-Cobb, Jenna Perkins, Tesfaye Hambisa Mekonnen, Bronwyn McDonald, Tasneem Mahdi Adam Kamoni, Claire Hutton, Kimberley Moss and Jeana Wong.

Overall, the conference was a great success and demonstrated the work being done and what work still needs to be done in the academic primary care space.







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