



MONASH
University

EASTERN HEALTH CLINICAL SCHOOL

**2024
ANNUAL REPORT**



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HEAD OF SCHOOL REPORT

I am honoured to be able to provide the Annual Report for Eastern Health Clinical School (EHCS) for 2024.



EHCS represents the coming together for mutual benefit of Eastern Health and Monash University, and with Deakin University for EHCS Medical Student Programs. Education and research are embedded within Eastern Health’s structure and strategic priorities, and Eastern Health as one of Victoria’s largest health services is a major partner to both Monash and Deakin Universities. EHCS leaders have university and Eastern Health appointments, and collectively form a pivot point around which excellence and continual improvement can thrive.

The result of this partnership is a world-class community of clinicians and academics, working together for the benefit of those we serve: pre- and post-registration health care students; higher degree research students; our staff; and most importantly, our local and broader community. Our stakeholders rely on us to provide outstanding education and training for current and future health professionals; to perform impactful and relevant research; and, for those of us with clinical roles, to lead by example in all aspects of clinical care and governance to model our values and those of our stakeholder organisations.

EHCS is a collaborative and inclusive community. We work closely with our colleagues across Eastern Health and with the other major Eastern Health university partners, La Trobe and Deakin. EHCS provides resources, support, and guidance for anyone in Eastern Health who needs it, particularly with respect to research activity and support infrastructure. We bring the strengths of both Monash and Deakin University to our everyday work, enhancing the quality of the experiences of our students and staff, and contributing at every level to the EHCS has impact well beyond the bounds of the health service and the universities. Field-weighted citation index (FWCI) is the ratio of the actual number of citations received by an output to date and the expected number for an output with similar characteristics. A FWCI of 1 is considered “world average impact.” Our FWCI overall for 2019-2024 is 2.15 (Figure 1). This places us amongst the best in the world by such metrics. For comparison, the top ranked universities in the world according to Times Higher Education¹ are University of Oxford (SciVal FWCI: 2.19), MIT (FWCI: 2.42), and Harvard University (FWCI: 2.19); Australia’s largest university (Monash) overall has FWCI 2.00, and FWCI 2.54 for outputs from its international collaborations (these being an indirect measure of research quality). In the period 2019-2024, 41.6% of EHCS outputs were international, with this subgroup leading to 33,435 citations with a mean 28.2 citations per publication and FWCI of 3.33².

1 <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/latest/world-ranking>, accessed 10 Jan 2025
2 SciVal; data as at 10 January 2025

Figure 1: Scholarly metrics for EHCS

	Overall 2019-2024	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	(2024)*
Scholarly output	2849	406	464	539	478	468	(494)
Citations**	52,225	16,351	15,123	10,606	5895	3389	(861)
Mean citations per publication**	18.3	40.3	32.6	19.7	12.3	7.2	(1.7)
Field-weighted citation impact	2.15	2.73	1.92	1.85	2.11	2.15	(2.28)
% outputs in top 10% of citations worldwide (field-weighted)	17.6	13.5	19.8	16.7	16.1	18.8	(20.0)
% publications in top 10% of journals (CiteScore)	39.1	36.8	42.2	38.8	38.4	36.6	(41.3)
% publications in top quartile of journals (Q1) (CiteScore)	65.7	60.3	65.4	66.7	66.4	63.8	(70.2)

Data per SciVal as at 10 January 2025.
Data are incomplete for 2024
** Citations accumulate over time and will usually be higher for older time frames

Another measure of academic activity is the success of our medical students. Monash and Deakin medical students in 2024 had outstanding academic outcomes, a testament to the quality of our teaching and our teachers, and the Eastern Health environment in which it takes place. The vast majority of our students report a positive experience and good wellbeing, would recommend us to their colleagues, and feel well prepared for internship. Further details are found in the Medical Student Programs report elsewhere in this Annual Report.

These outstanding indicators highlight that Eastern Health, and specifically EHCS, is a place where people want to come to learn and work, and that the experiences they have here are very positive. They show that value of having a vibrant, productive, and world-class academic program led by a top university and embedded within an enabling and supportive health care system.

2024 was a year of growth and achieving new heights of quality and productivity for EHCS. It was a difficult year for Victorian health services overall, with substantial budget and other resourcing challenges. The structure of EHCS, together with the energy, expertise, and enthusiastic involvement of so many people, meant that we were able to preserve and grow our academic activities. You will see in this report descriptions of activities through various units, resulting in growth in our impact, increased research revenue, and record investment back into the system to support current and future research. A selection of highlights for 2024 is provided at the end of this introduction.

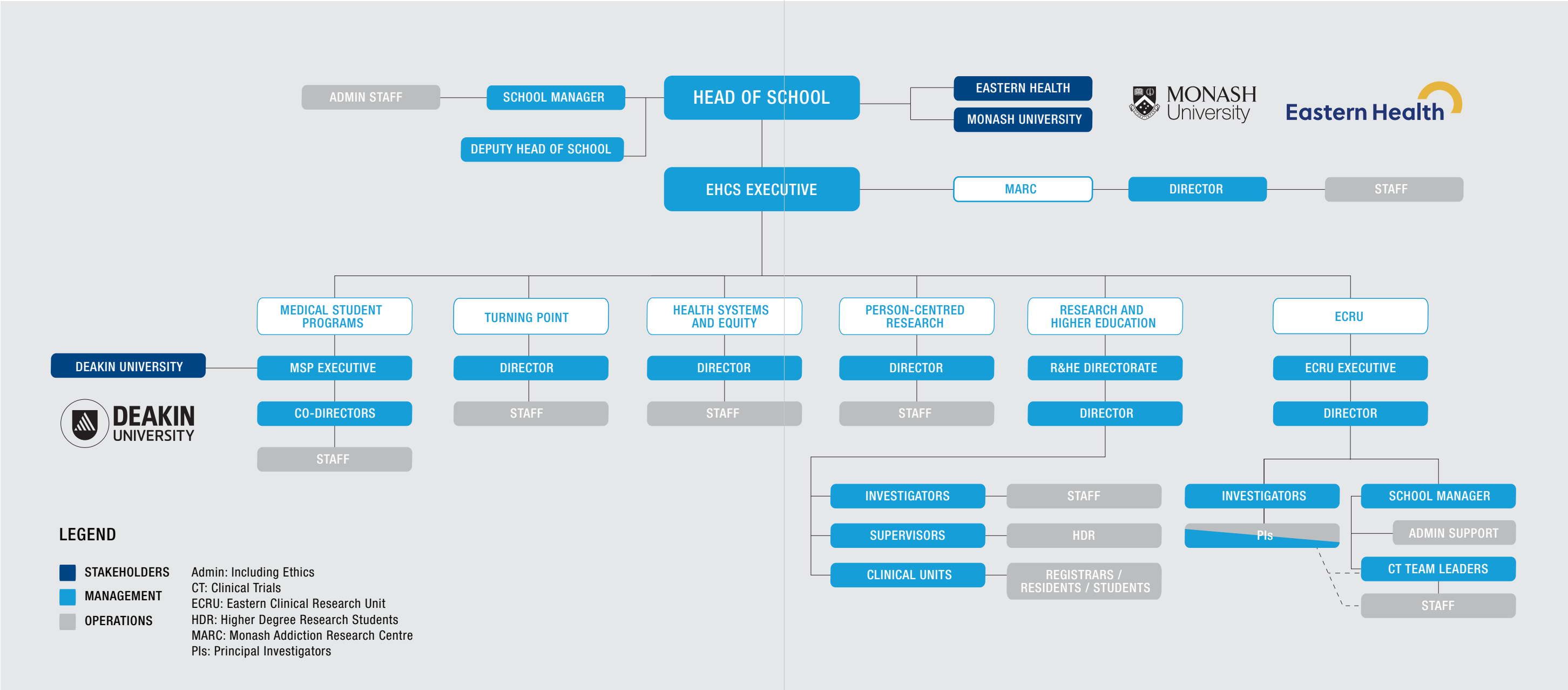
EASTERN HEALTH CLINICAL SCHOOL: GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

The activities of EHCS are overseen by the EHCS Executive. This comprises the Head of School, School Manager, directors of each directorate, the Professor of Surgery, and two other Monash academics (currently Prof Lawrence McMahon and A/Prof Judy Hope). The EHCS Executive formally meets five times per year and informally as needed. EHCS minutes are tabled at the Faculty Executive of Monash University’s Faculty of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences. Reporting to Eastern Health takes place through the Eastern Health Institute. Medical Student Programs reports to Monash and Deakin Universities and to Eastern Health through the EHCS MSP Executive. The directorates meet regularly to ensure effective engagement of stakeholders, including staff, students, and collaborators linked to the function of each directorate. EHCS also provides central administrative support for functions such as finance, ethics, human resources, university relations; and engagement with and reporting to various groups within Eastern Health, other collaborators, funders, and government. These central functions simplify education and research processes for all involved, ensuring high quality and minimising the burden to individual academics, professional staff, students, and adjuncts.

EHCS has now increased in size by two directorates since early 2022, most with the establishment in 2022 of Health Systems and Equity, and most recently in 2024 the new Person-Centred Research directorate. EHCS now has six directorates, and one off-site Centre, as illustrated in Figure 2. Reports from each of these are found elsewhere in this Annual Report.

Actual full-time equivalent (FTE) staff in 2024 were: 7.4 FTE academic staff (growth of 2.2; 42%); 25.7 FTE research academic staff (growth of 7.4; 40%); 60.4 FTE research professional staff (growth of 5.9; 11%); and 13.8 FTE professional and technical staff (similar to 2023), most of whom provide support for EHCS Medical Student Programs, the ECRU clinical research program, the laboratory group based at Box Hill, Turning Point, and MARC. Almost all staff are employed through Monash University, with some having joint appointments also with Eastern Health and/or Deakin University.

Figure 2: EHCS organisational chart



The EHCS Strategic Plan 2021-2025 is illustrated in Figure 3. The plan has served the School well and is due to be refreshed in 2025. It remains well aligned with the current strategic plans for Monash, Deakin, and Eastern Health, and has provided an excellent framework to support the Eastern Health Institute structure established in 2023.

Figure 3: EHCS Strategic Plan 2021-2025 – Strategic Themes and Goals

Strategic Theme	1. Excellence for the community 	2. Excellence for the health service 	3. Excellence for the university 	4. Excellence for our people 
Strategic Goals	1.1 Best quality clinical outcomes	2.1 Highest quality care	3.1 Outstanding student outcomes	4.1 Promoting staff and student wellbeing
	1.2 Best quality clinical trials	2.2 Leading an integrated, community-focussed research agenda	3.2 High quality research outcomes	4.2 Provision of support systems
	1.3 Understanding and meeting needs	2.3 Adding value to education and vocational training	3.3 Community of clinical educators	4.3 Opportunities for professional growth
	1.4 Bringing networks together	2.4 Leveraging value from health data	3.4 Leadership in university functions	

Progress against the EHCS Strategic Plan 2021-2025 during 2024 can be illustrated as follows.

EXCELLENCE FOR THE COMMUNITY

1.1 Best quality clinical outcomes: senior clinical leaders at Eastern Health are actively engaged in clinical care and clinical governance. Many have national or international research profiles, generating evidence to improve clinical care and outcomes, and for continuous quality improvement at Eastern Health and the broader community.

1.2 Best quality clinical trials: the award-winning EHCS Eastern Clinical Research Unit (ECRU) provides support for clinical trials in most areas of internal medicine, as well as providing broader support for various surgical or other types of clinical trials and non-trial clinical research. This enables access top new and better treatments for the population we serve, while ensuring that world-class industry-sponsored or investigator-initiated clinical trials are available in the geographic area in which our patients live.

1.3 Understanding and meeting needs: it is not enough simply to perform outstanding research or to provide high quality education; Eastern Health and its partners need to be aware of community needs and priorities, work with the broader community (including other health care providers), translate research findings into practice, and to train and support the next generation of clinicians, educators, and researchers. This is true patient-centred care, and recognises that we exist as a resource for the broader community.

1.4 Bringing networks together: EHCS and Eastern Health are key components of the Monash Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre, linking to other Monash University health services, affiliated research institutes, central university resources, and collaborators. This also allows other major university partners such as Deakin and La Trobe universities to participate. EHCS has developed strong links with Primary Health Networks to grow research and education opportunities beyond the walls of Eastern Health. Monash Partners also facilitates consumer and community engagement, and has developed infrastructure for reliable registry data collection systems, and links to other datasets. Other initiatives such as the Turning Point ambulance project provide valuable resources for other researchers in Victoria, as well as nationally and internationally.

EXCELLENCE FOR THE HEALTH SERVICE

2.1 Highest quality care: excellence in clinical outcomes requires excellent clinicians, and also requires excellent systems and infrastructure. Increasing demand cannot be met indefinitely simply by employing more people; it requires better understanding and use of existing systems and resources. EHCS contributes to Eastern Health continuous quality improvement, through provision and interpretation of data, research into new approaches to care, and rational use of existing resources in an increasingly resource-constrained setting. An example is the recent establishment of a geriatric oncology clinic, based on PhD research by EH/EHCS geriatric oncologist Dr Wee-Kheng Soo. Dr Soo’s work showed that a single comprehensive geriatric assessment could improve quality of life and other outcomes for older people receiving anticancer treatment, using systems and resources that were already in place but not used routinely or in a coordinated way. This led to establishment of a dedicated geriatric oncology clinic that is now translating these research findings into practical improved outcomes for older people with cancer. Other work from EHCS has led to new ways of triaging patients, modulating patient flow, and using limited resources effectively, to ensure that those most in need are seen most expeditiously in outpatient clinics or through surgical waiting lists.

2.2 Leading an integrated, community-focussed research agenda: EHCS works with Eastern Health to identify and meet specific community needs. Two new EHCS directorates (Health Systems and Equity, and Person-Centred Research) explicitly demonstrate the commitment of EHCS to improving outcomes particularly for those most disadvantaged or underserved by current systems. A new First Nations cancer clinic, nangnak warr bagora, was established at Healesville in 2024, working in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to meet the needs they identified. This will help close a major gap in health outcomes, while providing opportunities for culturally appropriate care as well as teaching, training, and research relevant to the community.

2.3 Adding value to education and vocational training: Eastern Health is an excellent place for health professional students to train, and for postregistration health professionals to obtain invaluable experience and to progress their careers. This requires a culture where education and training are core activities of everyday work, supported by robust pedagogy, and with opportunities for people to stretch themselves in learning new skills and obtaining further qualifications. EHCS is integrally involved in providing support particularly for medical students and professionals, as well as for other disciplines. This promotes wellbeing and satisfaction of students as they progress into employment in their chosen field, together with programs of ongoing professional education, research and higher degree opportunities, and specific support for early- and mid-career researchers. EHCS provides and supports simulation facilities, and access to short courses, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary learning, workshops, seminars, and personalised support for trainees.

2.4 Leveraging value from health data: data collection processes for the health system are continually evolving, but are often used primarily for reporting and accountability. Similarly, clinical medical records, particularly where these are electronic, are mainly for immediate clinical care and administration, and generally not designed for other purposes. These are potential lost opportunities, as data without expert interpretation, or that is collected without recognition of its limitations and potential biases, can be potentially misleading. EHCS is working closely with Eastern Health, and various external collaborators including government data repositories, to improve the quality of data and to allow more effective use of it. EHCS continues to partner with Eastern Health and the Digital Health CRC for the ADEPT-EH project, which has now successfully met its main objective of providing real time dashboard information to facilitate reporting and accreditation requirements across the various National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards. This work is now being scaled up to be more applicable, with several other organisations interested in testing and applying it.

EXCELLENCE FOR THE UNIVERSITY

3.1 Outstanding student outcomes: our feedback tells us that students come to Eastern Health and to EHCS because they know they will receive education and training of the highest quality, because they want to learn here and work here, and because it has been recommended to them by those who have been here before. Once again, our academic outcomes for both Monash and Deakin medical students in 2024 have been very strong, and educators and students agree that our students are well prepared for transition into practice by the time they complete their course with us. Medical Student Programs continually reviews its processes and systems, and has pioneered several innovative approaches to medical education, including the Patient Teaching Associates program, the Finding Meaning in Medicine led by A/Prof Deb Leach and Dr Grace Walpole, and the Healers Art course. Monash MD students also undertake a Scholarly Intensive Placement in their final year; EHCS consistently provides a very broad range of high quality experiences for its SIP students, many of whom come back for further research or higher degree opportunities. Similarly, although our numbers of BMedSc(Hons) students are not high, our program was amongst the top ratings in the Faculty, with students rating their experience as outstanding.

3.2 High quality research outcomes: individual and population health can only continue to improve if high quality and relevant research is undertaken, and the results of research translated back into health care policy and practice. Our research has considerable impact, not just in Eastern Health and our local community, but on a national and international scale. Our research is frequently cited in government or other policy documents, and in clinical practice guidelines. Work such as that performed through Turning Point has led to changes in community perception and approach by government to dealing with the challenges of alcohol and other drugs, gambling, and management of addiction and addiction recovery. Novel approaches to collection and application of data have led to resources that support secondary research by investigators across Australia and internationally.

3.3 Community of clinical educators: EHCS includes a core team of educators within the School, but relies substantially on teaching and support provided by the wider community of clinicians and clinical educators in Eastern Health, including many adjuncts and affiliates; and other partners such as Epworth Healthcare and general practices. This broader community is well supported with materials, training, access to resources from both Monash and Deakin Universities, and pastoral care. This in turn leads to better quality health care as clinicians are naturally challenged by students in every setting to be able to demonstrate the quality of their clinical expertise, critical thinking, and application of evidence.

3.4 Leadership in university functions: Various EHCS staff have broader roles on committees and other functions within Monash and Deakin Universities. These include leadership roles, operational activities beyond those of EHCS itself, support for shared functions and resources such as Monash Partners, and links to collaborators and to other academic organisations and networks.



EXCELLENCE FOR OUR PEOPLE

4.1 Promoting staff and student wellbeing: the safety and wellbeing of our people is a top priority for EHCS and its leadership. We are proud to be able to offer a broad range of initiatives to help support wellbeing, such as mindfulness, lunchtime Pilates, yoga, and a dog wellness program. The Occupational Health and Safety Committee, chaired by Head of School, has been renamed with Monash to the Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee. The HSW Committee was shortlisted for a Monash Vice Chancellor's Award in 2024 in recognition of its consistent high standards, excellent outcomes, ongoing initiatives, and leadership of HSW at the university level. The HSW Committee also oversees our sustainability initiatives, which again is exemplary: the EHCS Waste Warriors once again achieved Platinum status for its sustainability activities in 2024. This program includes extensive recycling programs such as soft plastic, drug blister packs, batteries, and pens; provides reusable coffee cups for EHCS people to use, resulting in a substantial reduction of disposable cup usage; the "Swap don't Shop" initiative; and a composting program that supports an herb garden outside 5 Arnold St.

4.2 Provision of support systems: EHCS provides support internally for its educators and researchers for finance, equipment, IT, human resources, library, statistical support, and ethics. It also provides support for others within Eastern Health not directly affiliated with Monash University. A key initiative that has expanded substantially in recent years allows support for quarantined research time that would otherwise not be able to be made available.

4.3 Opportunities for professional growth: part of the role of EHCS is to grow and nurture our students and staff to help them progress in their professional lives. We look for opportunities to stretch expertise and experience, obtain new training and skills, support formal education, and other mechanisms to enable people to perform exceptionally in their current roles and to support their aspirations for further career development.



SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2024

This Annual Report contains a wealth of information highlighting our activities and achievements over 2024. It contains reports from the EHCS directorates and various Eastern Health units, interspersed with highlights and vignettes to illustrate the breadth and depth and quality of our activities. It makes for impressive reading, and despite our best efforts it probably still understates what we do.

Some other selected highlights from throughout 2024 are as follows:

- Appointment of Dr Emma Ku as new co-director of Medical Student Programs, together with A/Prof Caroline Dowling.
- Establishment of new Person-Centred Research directorate, led by A/Prof Sandra Nolte (pictured below).
- 50% increase in PhD student numbers.
- NHMRC, MRFF, and other grant and fellowship successes.
- Women’s Health Symposium in Malaysia convened by A/Prof Jacqui Boyle and Dr Siew Lim of the Health Systems and Equity directorate.
- New Monash short course “Equity in Health Research” led by Health Systems and Equity.
- MARC Emerging Researcher Symposium 2 May 2024.
- Numerous academic promotions.
- Recruitment of Dr Ed Kwan (pictured below), medical oncologist and world-leading expert in circulating tumour DNA and cancer genomics, to a clinical appointment at Eastern Health and a dual Monash appointment with EHCS and the Biomedicine Discovery Institute.
- Associate of the Year Award to A/Prof Jacqui Boyle at the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association event.
- A/Prof Sandra Nolte, director of Person-Centred Research, elected President-Elect of the International Society for Quality of Life Research, the pre-eminent global society for this discipline.
- RANZCP 2024 Victorian Branch Meritorious Award to Prof Dan Lubman AM.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

2024 was a year of strategic growth and expansion, and the School and the people we serve have been rewarded with outstanding outcomes. EHCS is a pivot point of excellence between Eastern Health and its major partner universities, particularly Monash. We provide people, systems, and resources that would not otherwise be available. We have a governance and management model that is robust, fit for purpose, transparent, and aligned with the needs of our stakeholders. We have existing and new opportunities to grow further and allow us to address more areas of unmet need in our broader community. EHCS has positioned itself distinctively within the academic and clinical communities, and we are confident that our impact will continue to grow and spread. We will continue over the course of 2025 and beyond to meet this promise.

Specific areas of further development will include (but not be limited) to the following:

- Support and growth of our existing groups and initiatives.
- Recognising and responding effectively to the academic needs of our community.
- Provision of opportunities for new researchers and research groups.
- “Future proofing” our growth by securing appropriate space and facilities for expansion.
- Growing opportunities for people to undertake research higher degrees.
- Modelling how research and education are key components of everyday clinical care and governance of a health system.
- Improve existing infrastructure and processes underpinning the support provided by EHCS to its staff and students as well as to others in Eastern Health.
- Specific support for early and mid-career researchers, and those with substantial academic components to their careers.
- Increasingly effective interaction with and leadership of Monash Partners initiatives, themes, and platforms.
- Effective support for Eastern Health Institute as the Eastern Health governance structure overseeing academic activities and university relations.

The future continues to be bright. We look forward to bringing it to you.

I commend to you this EHCS Annual Report for 2024.



Ian Davis
Head, Eastern Health Clinical School
Professor of Medicine, Monash University and Eastern Health
Affiliate Professor, Deakin University
NHMRC Leadership Fellow L3

DIRECTORATE REPORTS

MEDICAL STUDENT PROGRAMS

CO-DIRECTORS: A/PROF CAROLINE DOWLING AND DR EMMA KU

Medical education has undergone significant changes over the years. The curriculum expands every year, technological innovations both enhance and challenge our students’ experience. Professionalism expectations have become ever more detailed. Medical Student Programs (MSP) continues to respond to these changes with an innovative, adaptive and deeply considered approach to curriculum and student development. Whilst the landscape is complex the goal is not - we support the growth of medical students as lifelong learners, assisting them to become thriving, capable and well-rounded doctors.

We enter 2025 having collaboratively developed a new strategic plan. This has clarified our purpose and brought our team new direction and momentum. Several projects are already underway and are mentioned below. There is excitement as we move to realise the opportunity and stimulus of our strategy. Our strategy centres around the five important pillars of our students, our staff, our programs and their assessment and development, and the key relationships with both clinical units and our facilitators. We emphasise growth and innovation for all those involved.

In 2024 we educated 351 medical students from Monash and Deakin Universities - our largest cohort to date. We have welcomed 376 students into 2025. All of our final year students in both universities graduated and will now have begun their career as junior doctors - a significant number of these chose to stay on at Eastern Health, which is a testament to their positive experience.

We continue to excel as a clinical school. 89% of our final year students report a positive learning experience with MSP, more than 83% would recommend us to their colleagues, and 86% would choose MSP again if they had their time over. 87% of students felt an overall sense of wellbeing with MSP, and 85% felt a sense of preparedness for internship. We celebrate these figures, and work to see them increase further.



MSP Team

MSP AWARDS

MSP’s internal student awards were presented at our end-of-year celebration events. These awards recognise a range of achievements including outstanding clinical placement feedback, the consistent demonstration of MSP’s key values, exceptional patient-centred care skills, and the acknowledgement of excellent peer representation and collegiality. Sixty students were nominated across the various year levels and award categories, and 18 winners or joint winners were announced.

MSP STUDENT AWARD - for demonstrating the MSP values of respect, innovation, kindness, excellence, accountability	
Deakin Year 3	Kirsty Stephens
Deakin Year 4	Alexandra Malanina
Monash Year 3B	Nathan Gentis & Sinthu Senthilmohan
Monash Year 5D	Ben O’Gorman & Jeremy Bolton

MSP PEER AWARD - for demonstrating collegiality, support and respect, for their colleagues	
Deakin Year 3	Yianni Droungas
Monash 3B	Mahdiar Shegefti

SPECIAL MENTION AWARDS - for outstanding feedback from their Clinical Unit or MSP staff members	
Monash 5D	Ben O’Gorman, Bernard Tso, Elissa Ong, Grace Chung, Hannah Davey, Jeremy Bolton, and Pamali Hewage

PTA STUDENT RECOGNITION AWARD - for exceptional patient-centred care	
Deakin Year 3	Molly Horan
Monash 3B	Xavier Dooley & Jaffer Al-Haidary

FACULTY AWARDS/SIP AWARDS	
EHCS Pre-Intern Prize	Ben O’Gorman
EHCS Student Award	Fleur Williams
EHCS SIP Awards	Angelyn Neoh
2024 Y5 WAM Commendations letter from EHCS	Qi Cheng, Timothy Hung, Magnus Liew, Samantha Lugowski Monica Rezkalla, Jia Ying Tan, Pei Ying Tan, Fleur Williams, Caitlin Zhou, Isabelle Brugliera, Zhi Chai, Xin Chen.
The Jo Wainer Prize - awarded to a EHCS student who has demonstrated a sustained commitment to research, education, or engagement in the area of Women’s Health, Gender in Health or Rural Health.	Kartik Iyer
EHCS Monash Year 3B Prize	Nathan Gentis and Sinthu Senthilmohan

After 6 years of innovative and effective leadership of our unit we farewellled A/Prof Deb Leach. We are grateful to continue to have the capable leadership of A/Prof Caroline Dowling, who has now been joined as Co-Director by Dr Emma Ku. Dr Ku is a highly respected Emergency Physician from the Emergency Department team at EH, trained under A/Prof Leach and Dr Jane Lukins with a strong background in education and simulation. Our other academic staff remain unchanged and a stable influence.

On the administrative side, Anwen Hughes, our valued Senior Planning Officer is now on maternity leave and we have been joined by Tash Seneviratne. Madelene Kiremitciyan joined us as Clinical Skills Educator at Maroondah and has been demonstrating good leadership in this space. Our new Executive Assistant Karina Nicholson has been a wonderful addition to MSP.

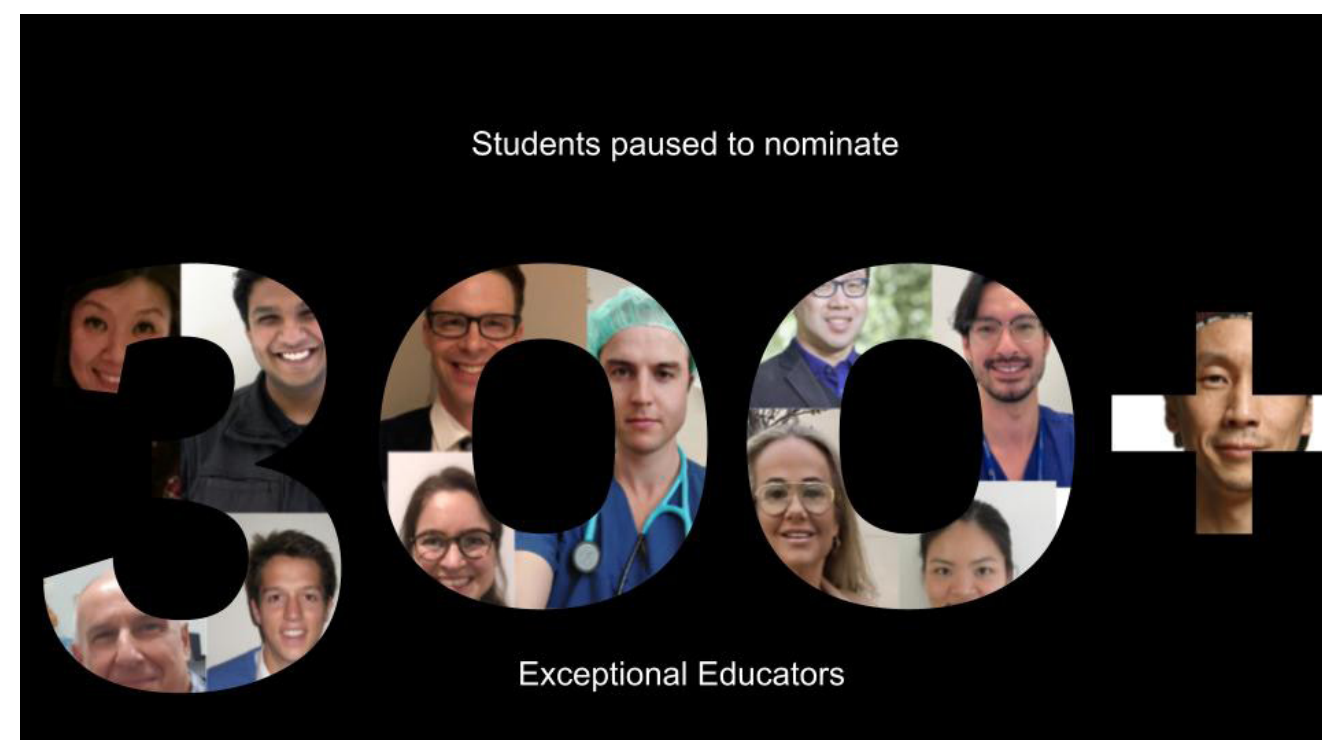
Our academic and administrative staff remain our most valuable resource, as evidenced by our consistently positive student feedback for our team. Students describe our team as having provided invaluable support and having been essential to their progress to their intern year. A new process of staff development will protect and enhance this into 2025.

Our educational programs are designed to integrate with and support the learning students receive on rotation. The majority of these occur through our Simulation Centres. As part of our commitment to excellence we are reviewing our curriculum, conducting a revitalisation of all our program offerings and investing in high quality equipment. We are excited to be appointing a new Medical Simulation Lead in 2025 and know that this will elevate all our programs, as well as expand what we are able to offer.

These programs could not be delivered without our faculty of wonderful facilitators. Our educators are the face of our teaching, and we couldn't be more grateful for their incredible contribution. This year we received over 300 individual nominations by the students, of Eastern Health educators, in recognition of their outstanding teaching. Our students explicitly learn vital knowledge from our educators, but the implicit imparting of wisdom, character and professionalism is immeasurable in value.

The hospital units are the engine rooms of our student learning. As students join ward rounds, unit meetings and clinics they take their first steps into a community of practice, which will sustain and challenge them in their journey towards competence and professionalism. MSP has begun an engagement project to provide better support to these units and build on an already excellent student experience.

We look forward to serving our students, educators and hospital units in 2025.



RESEARCH

- Development of empathy in General Surgeons (Masters of Education), Christine Cuthbertson Supervisors: Jenepher Martin, Debra Nestel. Master of Surgical Education thesis, (The University of Melbourne).
- Regulation and professionalism for medical students in Australia – four educational modules. Student Module working group AHPRA and MBA (incl Jenepher Martin). Peer reviewed education resource. Published: Medical Board of Australia. <https://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration/Educational-resources-for-medical-students.aspx> Published online: Medical Board of Australia.
- Medical Board of Australia (MBA) professionalism and regulation education resources: pilot implementation in medical schools. Barr, J; Martin, J; Biggar, S; White, M; Wylie, J; Heredia, D; O'Shannessy, M. ANZHAPE 2024. July 1-4, Adelaide. Oral presentation.
- Entrustable professional activities (EPA) for surgeons in the Australian context. Balaravi Pillai, Balakavitha; Martin, Jenepher; Ip, Eugenia; James, Kirsten. Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Annual Scientific Congress, Christchurch Aotearoa. New Zealand. 6-10 May 2024. Poster.
- Consensus statement: support for supervisors of surgical training in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Deborah Paltridge, Jenepher Martin, James Churchill, Richard Grills, Benjamin Loveday, Rommie das Gupta, Sarah Catherine Rennie. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Surgery. 2024 94 (7-8): 1221-1227. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/ans.19111>. Journal publication.
- Unaccredited Specialty Surgery 'Training', the impact of the 'pre-SET' years. Caroline Dowling, Benjamin Gorman, Emily Schembri, Jenepher Martin, Shomik Sengupta, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Annual Scientific Congress 2024, Christchurch Aotearoa, New Zealand. ANZJS Suppl: SE002 5 May 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ans.1897>. Oral presentation.
- Unaccredited Specialty Surgery 'Training', the impact of the 'pre-SET' years. Caroline Dowling, Benjamin Gorman, Emily Schembri, Jenepher Martin, Shomik Sengupta. Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Educator Studio Session. 18 September 2024. Webinar.

STUDENT SUPPORT

We have assisted students who have had various sorts of difficulties or prior challenges, with very positive outcomes.





Clinical skills in action!



Clinical skills training continues



RU OK Day



Final Year Awards

TURNING POINT

DIRECTOR: PROF DAN LUBMAN AM

Turning Point is Australia’s leading addiction treatment and research centre, dedicated to providing high-quality, evidence-based care for people adversely affected by alcohol, drugs and gambling.

In addition to delivering addiction treatment services across the Eastern region, Turning Point operates over 20 helplines across the country, as well as building the capacity and skills of health professionals through its broad program of workforce development and postgraduate training. The centre draws on its clinical, research, and policy expertise to provide evidence-based advice to government, to drive systemic change and ensure people can access more timely and effective treatment and support.

In 2024, Turning Point continued to provide high-quality treatment and support for our clients, as well as world-leading research and education programs.

Significant research activity continued across a broad range of areas, including the launch of a number of novel NHMRC and MRFF-funded trials. These included the multi-centre *MPATHY* trial testing MDMA-assisted psychological therapy as a treatment for both Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the *Modif-i* trial, a national trial of a new Cognitive Bias Modification mobile app for people with AUD in the community, an outpatient multi-centre trial of cannabidiol for Cannabis Use Disorder, and co-designing an evidence-informed, scalable school-based program to promote help-seeking for substance use problems. Other trials included an inpatient pilot study examining intranasal oxytocin for methamphetamine withdrawal, highlighting the value of clinical research embedded within routine clinical settings, as well as a brief intervention for people detected drink/drug driving delivered by Turning Point helpline counsellors in partnership with VicRoads. We also worked with the Department of Health to examine the experiences of people charged with low level drug possession to explore alternate health-led responses.

The National Addiction and Mental Health Surveillance Unit (NAHMSU) team coded over 900,000 ambulance records across the country, providing technical reports and data to the Victorian Department of Health, the New South Wales Ministry of Health and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. In addition, the NAMHSU team published several key papers, including an increase in ambulance attendances for suicidal behaviours among adolescent females during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as comorbid alcohol-related harms involving mental health presentations, highlighting the need for tailored intervention strategies to help meet the mental health needs of vulnerable groups in the community.

In total, Turning Point researchers were involved in 44 active projects, submitted 51 grants or tenders, published 35 journal articles with a further 27 accepted, and had 42 conference presentations (11 international).

In October, Turning Point and MARC made a submission to the Commonwealth Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport’s Inquiry into the Health Impacts of Alcohol and Other Drugs in Australia, and gave evidence at a parliamentary hearing. Other areas of policy work included submissions and policy statements on online and venue-based gambling, alcohol harms, and addiction-related stigma.

In April 2023, we launched the Hamilton Centre, the new Victorian Specialist Service for Addiction and Mental Health, in partnership with four clinical network hubs (Eastern Health, St Vincent’s, Western Health, Austin Health and Goulburn Valley Health). The Centre supports people with co-occurring mental illness and addiction to access holistic care and navigate a complex treatment system. The initiative is part of the implementation of the 2021 Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System’s recommendations. The service model was developed in partnership with Monash University’s Design Health Collab, using an innovative co-design process with lived experience, service providers and experts. In 2024, the Hamilton Centre won a number of design awards for this approach, including the prestigious Victorian Premier’s Design Award for Service Design.

Turning Point continues to deliver the Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, and the Master of Addictive Behaviours through Monash University, to more students than ever, with another year of excellent student feedback. As a result of support from the Victorian Department of Health, ANMF Victoria Branch and the Hamilton Centre, a total of 60 scholarships were made available for students of the Graduate Certificate in 2024.

On behalf of Turning Point’s Executive Leadership team, I would like to thank our dedicated staff, partners and collaborators for their support and commitment to minimising the harm, discrimination and stigma of addiction as we work together to transform the lives of those impacted by alcohol, drug and gambling harm.

Prof Dan Lubman AM



Hamilton Centre staff



Researchers and clinicians on the MPATHY trial

STUDENT OPEN NIGHT

Following the success of the 2023 Student Expo, in August 2024 Turning Point hosted a Student Open night at its Richmond office.

Around 60 people attended the evening including undergraduate students from Monash and other universities, clinicians seeking to upskill through post-graduate education and prospective Masters and PhD students. Turning Point and Monash University academics presented on a series of current PhD and scholarship opportunities, trainers and educators presented on internships, whilst lecturers and co-ordinators of the Graduate Program in Addictive Behaviours profiled the Gradate Certificate, Diploma and Masters courses, which underwent a major restructure and curriculum redesign in 2024. The Hamilton Centre also presented an overview of their online educational offerings which are designed to support the specific needs of people working in integrated care settings, equipping them with the necessary skills for positive change and social impact.

The night included a fireside chat with current and recently graduated PhD students discussing the advantages of engaging in more applied and translational research at Turning Point and the challenges of juggling clinical work and other commitments alongside part-time study.



Students at the expo



Fireside chat: PhD students and graduates (l-r) Ramez Bathish, Jodie Matar, Dr Katrin Oliver, Dr Anthony Hew, with Prof Victoria Manning



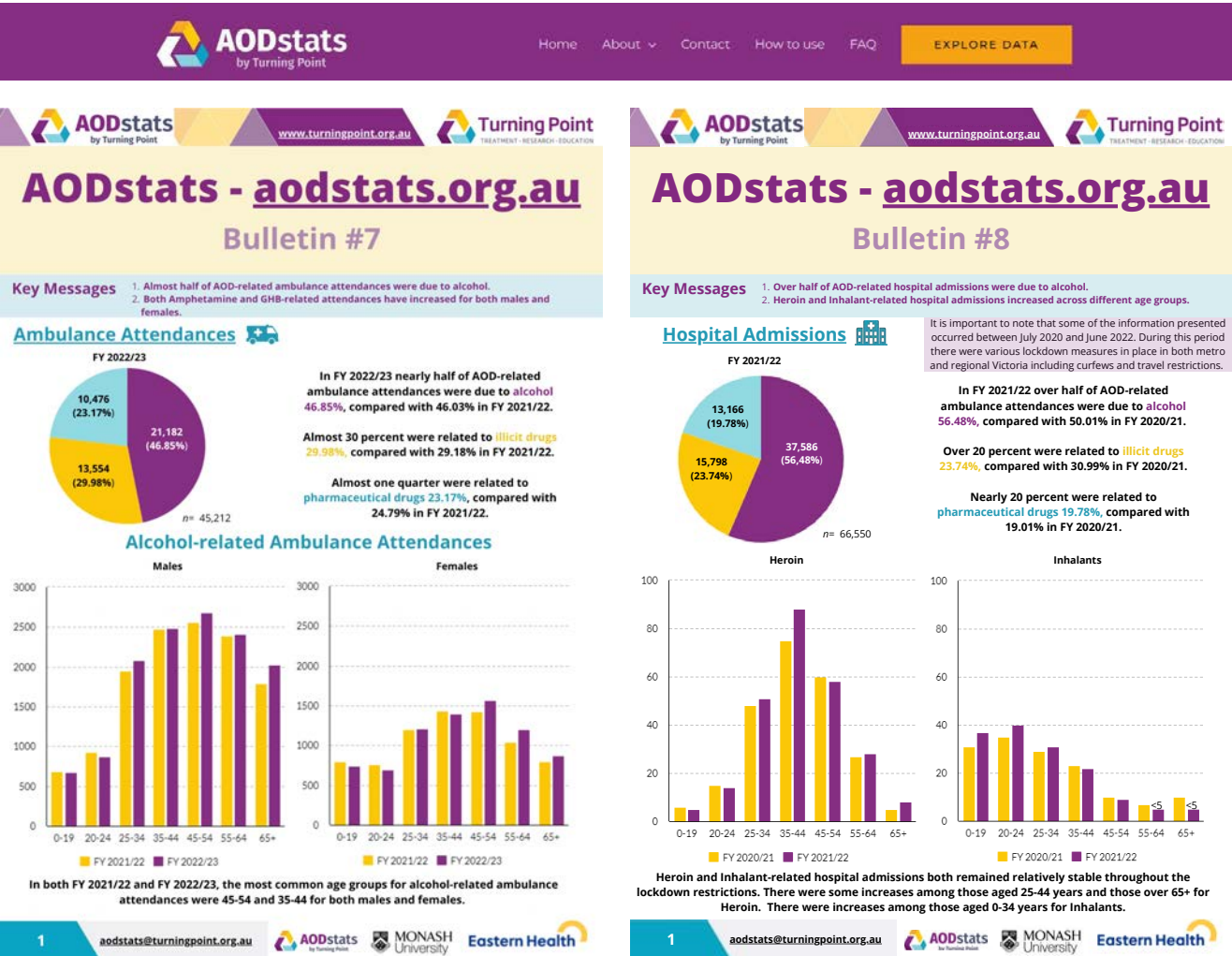
AODSTATS

AODstats is an interactive statistics and mapping webpage that provides information on the harms related to alcohol, illicit and pharmaceutical drugs across the Victorian community from 11 different datasets and run by the National Addiction and Mental Health Surveillance Team (NAMHSU) at Turning Point.

In 2024, AODstats had approximately 8,900 active users and the team released two bulletins for subscribers, relating to the most accessed datasets (ambulance attendance and hospital admission data).

Data from these bulletins showed some interesting trends that extended papers published by the team. In April, GHB-related presentations among males and females rose significantly (>50% change) in the 2022-23 year compared with 2021-22, across all age groups. In 2021/22, there were 37,586 hospitalisations that were due to alcohol/involved alcohol, representing over half (56%) of all AOD-related hospitalisations.

Providing transparent and consistent population-level data is critical in providing governments with an evidence base to make policy changes that minimise the impact and burden associated with alcohol and drug harms.



RESEARCH FUNDING

MAKINGTHELINK SCHOOL HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM

Funder: MRFF

The MRFF grant is funding further development of MAKINGtheLINK, an award-winning school-based program that empowers adolescents in Year 9 to develop the skills needed to seek help early for mental health concerns before adulthood. This project focuses on co-designing a web-based digital adaptation of the original MAKINGtheLINK program over four years, ensuring it is consistent with how students consume information today. Together with students, schools and partners, the MAKINGtheLINK project team will be building a scalable national solution to reduce mental health problems and alcohol and substance harms among students in Australia.

The MAKINGtheLINK project is a partnership between Turning Point, Monash University, headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation, Eastern Health, the Victorian Department of Education and the Australian Secondary Principals’ Association.

For more information go to:
<https://www.turningpoint.org.au/about-us/news/grant-announced-vital-help-young-people>

PILOTING A DIGITAL RECOVERY PLATFORM TO AID PEER WORKERS IN IMPROVING PATIENT OUTCOMES

Funder: Hospital Contributions Fund Foundation

Turning Point was one of four grants awarded in the 2024 Translational Research Scheme. In this pilot RCT led by ECR Dr Ari Roxburgh, peer workers will be trained to deliver REC-CAP a digital platform that measures patients’ recovery capital, identifies strengths and barriers, and helps them develop a plan to address these. It is expected that compared to usual care, REC-CAP will help peer workers improve their patients’ wellbeing, enhancing retention in treatment, and fostering growth in recovery capital after leaving residential treatment.

For more information go to:
<https://www.turningpoint.org.au/about-us/news/turning-point-successful-competitive-hcf-grant-funding>

CANNABIDIOL TRIAL

Funder: NHMRC

Cannabis use disorder (CUD) is increasingly common, affecting >150,000 Australians, and contributes to a range of health and social problems. Promising pilot data suggests that cannabidiol (CBD, a medicinal cannabinoid with anxiolytic and antipsychotic effects, but without intoxicating or addictive properties), reduces illicit cannabis use in patients with CUD.

This double-blind RCT will compare CBD (400mg oral daily) versus placebo, in a 12-week outpatient intervention in 250 treatment-seeking participants. The 4 year study will be conducted in specialist addiction services in Victoria (Turning Point) and NSW, bringing together leading clinical research groups, consumer organisations and Aboriginal stakeholders, including Aboriginal researchers, health workers and consumers.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Master of Addictive Behaviours program enables the development of specialist knowledge and professional skills to support individuals and communities impacted by addiction.

The course also offers a Graduate Certificate (12 months) and a Graduate Diploma (2 years), with 103 enrolments across all three programs in semester 1 and 82 enrolments in semester 2 of 2024. In 2024, there were 66 course completions (52 Grad Cert, 5 Grad Dip, 9 Master).

CONFERENCES

In September 2024, Melbourne welcomed the ISBRA³-APSAAR⁴ 2024 World Congress on Alcohol and Addictions, held at the Convention Centre. Turning Point staff were central to the conferences success with Profs Dan Lubman and Victoria Manning serving as members of the Organising Committee. As an International conference, the World Congress rotates between different regions of the world and this was its first visit to Australia for nearly 20 years. This high-profile and successful event attracted over 530 scientists and clinicians from 32 countries. With more than 150 presentations and 80 posters, it brought together world-leading addiction clinicians, academics, researchers, policy makers and lived experience experts to share their latest discoveries in advancing AOD treatment and policy. Turning Point researchers presented a total of 8 papers, and chaired plenary sessions over the 4 days.



3 International Society for Biomedical Research on Alcohol
4 Asia-Pacific Society for Alcohol and Addiction Research

RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION

DIRECTOR: PROF IAN DAVIS

The Research and Higher Education Directorate fills a gap in the academic activities of EHCS. It oversees research within EHCS that is not covered by ECRU, ie other than clinical trials; oversees the EHCS laboratory activities; and also oversees Higher Degree Research student activities and promotes new student opportunities. In addition, EHCS recognises that research activity takes place elsewhere within Eastern Health and not necessarily linked to a university partner, so that it can sometimes lack in essential areas of support. The R&HE directorate provides a link for EHCS and other Eastern Health researchers to:

- Support systems:
 - EHCS provides a full-time statistical consulting service for anyone within Eastern Health.
 - The EHCS ethics team is able to provide advice on preparation of ethics applications and other documentation.
 - EHCS research laboratory services are available where required, including links to other groups if the necessary technologies or systems are not available on site.
 - Information about funding opportunities, including student scholarship.
- Expertise:
 - Development of research questions
 - Formulation and implementation of a research plan
 - Conduct of a research project
 - Data analysis and interpretation
 - Assistance with preparation of reports, presentations, and manuscripts
 - Higher degree supervision
- Links:
 - Identification of and links to internal and external collaborators
 - Adaptation of systems in use elsewhere in EHCS or externally to meet specific needs
 - Links to registries and databases

The R&HE directorate meets four times per year and has an inclusive membership. Its agenda concentrates on strategy, systems, and operational support.

Dr Pavel Sluka continues to serve as the EHCS research higher degree coordinator and also the EHCS BMedSc(Hons) program. He also represents EHCS on the Monash Faculty Graduate Research Committee. As at December 2024:

- PhD students enrolled: 27
 - Awaiting enrolment: 1
- Master of Surgery students enrolled: 3
 - Awaiting enrolment: 1
- MPhil students enrolled: 2

STUDENT COMPLETIONS FOR 2024:

- Anuj Bohra (PhD with Daniel Van Langenberg)
- Monica Jung (PhD with Suzi Nielsen)
- Hannah Silva (PhD with Mayur Garg)
- Helena Cangadis-Douglass (MPhil with Suzanne Nielsen)
- Antara Karmakar (MSurg with Shomik Sengupta)
- Shantanu Joglekar (MSurg with Sean Mackay)
- Paul Rival (MSurg with Shomik Sengupta)
- Under examination: Penelope Casey (PhD with Pēteris Dārziņš)

HIGHER DEGREE STUDENTS AND PROJECTS

PhD	
Student	Project Title
Anthony Hew	Frequent mental health presenters - characteristics and opportunities for intervention
Anuj Bohra (PhD conferred)	Enhancing quality, and utility of disease assessment modalities in Crohn's disease
Aruni Malaweera	Determining the utility of uraemic toxins in peritoneal dialysis to optimise patient care
Chris Neason	Evaluating the feasibility and efficacy of running in individuals with chronic low back pain
Chuan Foo	Understanding mechanisms of airway and lung disease using hyperpolarised gas MRI
Claire Samanna	Can exercise improve intervertebral disc health?
Dereje Assefa	Opioid prescribing and dispensing: examining the impact of policy on practice
Gebre Ukke	Development of a diabetes prevention program for postpartum women with high metabolic risks in ET
Georgia Bolt	Personalised CBM in older adults with hazardous alcohol use: A novel cognitive intervention
Hannah Silva (PhD conferred)	Evaluation of the long-term outcomes of the low FODMAP diet in irritable bowel syndrome
Henry Yao	Genitourinary cancer survivorship – management of adverse effects of cancer treatment and improvement of quality of life during cancer survivorship
Hui Yi Ng	Detection of circulating tumour DNA in thyroid cancer for risk stratification and prognostication
Ifeoluwa Adesina	Advancing Women in Healthcare Leadership: Exploring the Intersection of Race, Gender and Ethnicity
Jiancheng Zeng	Cultural Integration in Type 2 Diabetes Prevention for Chinese Women with GDM History
Jie (Jenna) Yang	Research on exploring the best practice for management of concurrent chronic pain and opioid use disorder
Justin James	A model to select Early Breast Cancers where Sentinel Node Biopsy is not necessary
Krishneel Dutt	Assessment of Cardiac Function, Liver Disease, and Fibrosis in Inflammatory Bowel Disease
Lawrence Rivera	Out of the Urban Closet: Examining the Influence of “Safe Spaces” for LGBTQ+ People who Inject Drugs
Lik Hui (Will) Lau	Remote glucose monitoring and an interactive glucose management system in gestational diabetes
Lily Curtis	Alcohol consumption practices during COVID-19 and beyond
Madeleine Cosgrave	Postpartum care of women with hypertensive disorders of pregnancy

PhD	
Student	Project Title
Monica Jung	Utilising primary health care data to understand and optimise prescribing of drugs of dependence
Myfanwy Graham	Access to unapproved psychoactive medicines: Examining health outcomes for mental health and pain
Penelope Casey	Delirium in hospitalised adults: Nurses’ recognition and documentation practices
Ramez Bathish	Examining the philosophies, practices and experiences of AOD residential rehabilitation
Rose Laing	Social isolation, loneliness and substance abuse in older patients
Shananthan Balachandran	Novel Combination Therapies for Epithelial Thyroid Cancer
Timothy Scully	Improving the identification and management of transthyretin cardiac amyloidosis
Wubet Takele	Epidemiology of maternal malnutrition and gestational weight gain in the Amhara region, Ethiopia
Yuqi Dou	Addressing equity issues in gestational diabetes and Type 2 diabetes prevention: a focus on women from diverse cultural backgrounds

Master of Surgery	
Student	Project Title
Abram Botros	Implementation of risk stratification checklist & patient-specific care plans for bladder cancer
Antara Karmakar (M/Surg conferred)	Are you there?: Longitudinal detection of tumour-derived DNA in blood and urine during management of bladder cancer
Janindu Goonawardena	Predicting patients who would benefit from oesophagectomy following neoadjuvant chemoradiotherapy
Paul Rival	Assessing up to date guidelines on the management of recurrent UTIs: a pilot study
Ruth Snider	A contemporary tailored approach to recurrent urinary tract infections in females
Shantanu Joglekar (M/Surg conferred)	Reducing occupational scatter radiation dose exposure at ERCP

Master of Philosophy	
Student	Project Title
Ashling Courtney	Identifying risk factors relating to social disadvantage that influence atopic dermatitis
Edmond Wong	Novel investigation and therapeutics for atrial myopathy
Helena Cangadis-Douglass (PhD conferred)	Utilising routinely collected primary health care data to understand prescribing of opioids
James Gaston	Atopic Dermatitis in outer regional and remote Australians: An exploration of the epidemiology, management and outcomes

WINTER AND SUMMER STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Winter Scholarship	
Student	Project Title
Dinali Fernando	Improving preconception health literacy of women from culturally & linguistically diverse background
Mahbod Alian Fini	Evaluating Prescription Monitoring Program's Effect on 'Doctor Shopping' in Primary Care
Shasya Khairunnisa	Clinical Trial: MDMA-assisted prolonged exposure therapy for comorbid alcohol use disorder and PTSD
Tyla Parker	Development of a novel photo-angioplasty device for occlusive peripheral vascular disease

Summer Scholarship	
Student	Project Title
Alexa Yao	Audit of the utility of perioperative screening tools
Andy Lee	Acute mental health inpatient unit sensory project evaluation: impact on critical incidents
Dianxi Li	Evaluation of the national dissemination of an Opioid Safety Toolkit
Gayatri Chaturvedi	Improving access to care for people experiencing addiction
Joshua Poon	MOSAIC: comparison of antipsychotic medication prescription after an educational intervention
Vincent Yuan	Evaluation of the national dissemination of an Opioid Safety Toolkit
Xin Yi (Zoe) Lim	A retrospective study of the effect of GLP-1 agonist on gastric emptying
Yew Siong (Irvin) Soh	Eastern Health patient data in Australian Interstitial Lung Disease Registry
Yiran (Ian) Wang	Micronutrient deficiencies in patients with cirrhosis



EASTERN CLINICAL RESEARCH UNIT (ECRU)

DIRECTOR: PROF IAN DAVIS

Eastern Health and Monash University have a unique model to support clinical trials research, which has been highly successful over several decades. Clinical trials at Eastern Health for the most part are conducted under a Memorandum of Agreement, whereby ECRU, part of Monash University EHCS, is the vehicle by which clinical trials are performed. A detailed Standard Operating Procedure and underlying roles and responsibilities document ensure clarity and compliance with all the necessary components of the process. ECRU oversees the conduct of trials, financial management, facilitates agreements, employs almost all clinical trials coordinators and other clinical trials research staff; and provides support for Eastern Health to meet its contractual obligations with clinical trial sponsors, and the regulatory, governance, and Good Clinical Research Practice (GCP) requirements of clinical trials. Centralisation of processes through ECRU means that individual Eastern Health units do not need to reinvent them, and allows efficiencies and economies of scale that would otherwise not be possible. This flexibility also allows us to meet research demands outside those of industry-sponsored clinical trials.

The results of this mutually beneficial relationship are striking:

- Very high quality research. ECRU has been the recipient of industry awards for its work and continues to score >95% for GCP metrics (source: IQVIA), placing it at the highest levels of GCP quality in Australia.
- Improved patient outcomes. Eastern Health patients are able to access treatments they would not otherwise be able to access; or be closely monitored and supported while they receive world standard treatment as a comparator to the experimental treatment.
- Financial transparency. Revenue and expenditure are clearly defined and visible to both Eastern Health and Monash. The MoA ensures that Eastern Health costs of research are at least recovered, and our agreements provide support for diagnostic services such as the Box Hill MRI and PET scanners.
- Financial flexibility. Surplus revenue is folded back into the health service to support underfunded areas of research, such as investigator-initiated, grant funded, or cooperative group clinical trials. A very high proportion of Eastern Health clinical trials (45%) were of that nature in 2024; and they accounted for approximately 75% of Eastern Health patients participating in clinical trials.
- Improved efficiency. ECRU tracks the progress of clinical trials and advises Eastern Health finance regarding timely invoicing and cost recovery.
- Improved GCP compliance. ECRU monitors GCP accreditation of its researchers and staff, and has a system of SOPs and related documents to support GCP compliance and reporting.
- Attraction and retention of clinician-researchers. Financially constrained health services find it challenging to provide quarantined time for researchers, even when research is recognised as a key part of everyday health service work and strategy. Our model allows support for protected research time for key clinician-researchers.
- Training opportunities. The model provides a robust structure for training clinical fellows, senior staff, research professional staff, and higher degree students undertaking clinical trials as part of their degree.
- Support services. ECRU provides financial tracking for clinical trials in most Eastern Health units, as well as support for ethics submissions and other ethics and governance processes, and human resources management that would otherwise need to be undertaken by Eastern Health.
- University partnerships. The strong relationship with Monash University brings opportunities not otherwise possible, such as research fellow salary support through Monash Partners; data linkage systems; expertise in areas not available at Eastern Health, such as health economics; and dedicated researchers, some of whom have dual appointments and are embedded within Eastern Health.

59 new clinical trials were approved at Eastern Health through ECRU in 2024 (Figure A). The majority of clinical trials were in the fields of oncology and haematology (Figure B), similar to previous years, and reflecting the overall pattern of clinical trial activity worldwide at this time. Growth in trial activity is starting to slow, due to a lack of space to house research staff and to capitalise on new trial opportunities. Further growth in clinical trials and sustaining of the service will require additional dedicated space in the near future.

Figure A: Active ECRU Trials in 2024 by trial type. Source data: ECRU REDcap Clinical Trials Database, 4Dec2024.

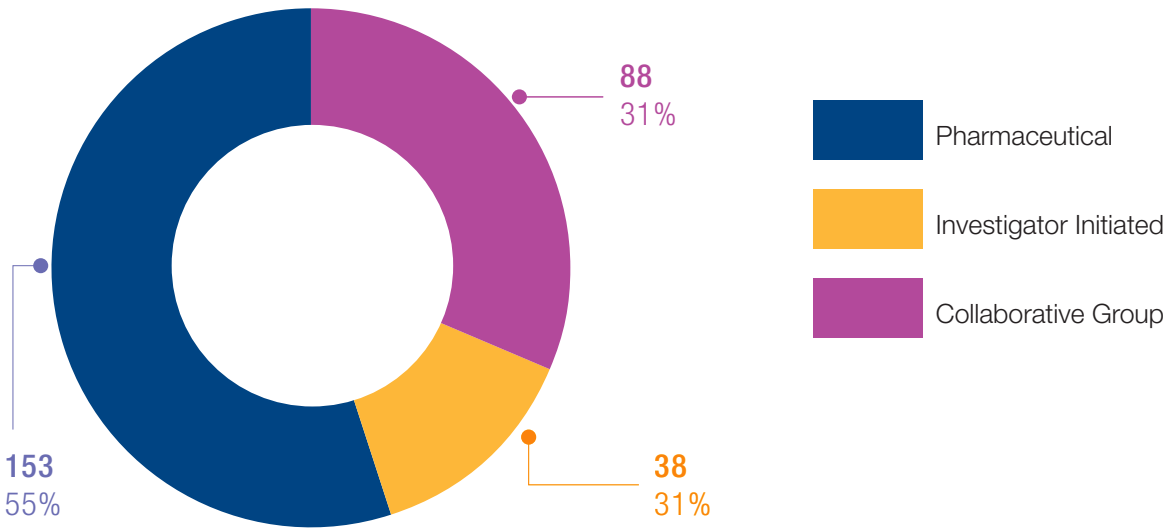
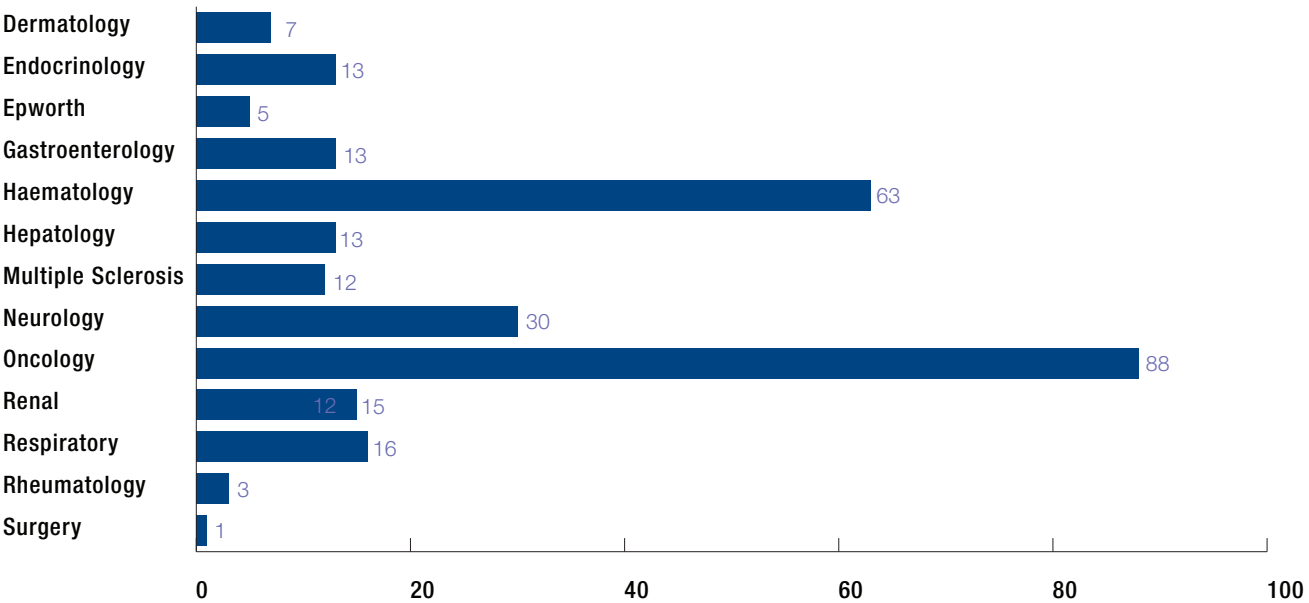


Figure B: Breakdown of ECRU Trials in 2024 by Unit. Source data: ECRU REDcap Clinical Trials Database, 4Dec2024.



HEALTH SYSTEMS AND EQUITY

DIRECTOR: A/PROF JACQUELINE BOYLE

The Health Systems and Equity Directorate mission is to deliver excellence in health equity research centred on people and community and strengthening integrated health systems. As part of this we provide leadership and education on equity and consumer and community involvement in research.

Our research themes include: Women's Health, Non-Communicable Disease Prevention, and Social and Emotional Wellbeing.

In 2024, our team contributed to 40 peer reviewed publications. We secured research funding grants that included women from migrant and refugee backgrounds in the following areas: perinatal mental health, endometriosis health promotion, co-design in pregnancy and postpartum care health services, gestational diabetes and prevention of T2DM, interconception health services integration, and health promotion. The team presented at 6 national and 6 international conferences and organised three international workshops on women's health and preconception health.

AWARDS

A/Prof Jacqui Boyle awarded Affiliate of the Year at the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association.

NETWORKS

We convene one national and two international networks.

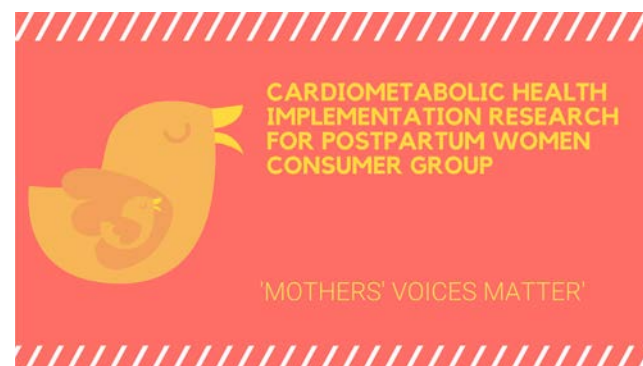


Under the auspices of CRE HiPP we run the National Preconception Network which was formed to link clinicians, community members, NGOs and researchers keen to improve preconception health. The Network shares information through newsletters and webinars and has contributed to government enquiries. The Network has also developed key research priorities and core indicators to monitor preconception health. However, HS&E have led work identifying that these data to assess core indicators are not reported and this is an area for future focus.

<https://hipp.org.au/networks/preconception-health-network/>

Investigators hold leadership, advisory and committee roles in:

- ADA/EASD Precision Medicine in Diabetes
- Nutrition Society of Australia
- Translating Research Outcomes into the Primary Health Interface (TROPHI)
- Migrant and Refugee Health Partnership Council
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- First Nations Women's Health committee
- Australian Health Research Alliance
- Women's Health Research and Translation Network
- Children by Choice
- World Stroke organisation-Lancet Neurology Commission Stroke Collaboration Group



CHiRP (Cardiometabolic Health Implementation Research for Postpartum individuals) is a team of international researchers interested in improving the health and wellbeing of women with young children. A consumer group with over 60 individuals born in more than 20 countries informs this work.

<https://hipp.org.au/networks/chirp/>



The Western Pacific Preconception Health Network was established in 2024 to bring together broad stakeholders to identify what are the key priorities in preconception health in the region, what is currently being done and how can we learn from each other and work together to improve preconception health in our region. Current members of the committee include representatives from Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, the Pacific, and Australia. New members of the network are welcome.

<https://www.monash.edu/medicine/ehcs/health-systems-and-equity/partnerships-and-networks/western-pacific-preconception-health-network>

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

BEPRECISE GUIDELINES

A key highlight in 2024 was Dr Lim's role as co-chair of Be PRECISE (Better Precision-data Reporting of Evidence from Clinical Intervention Studies and Epidemiology) consortium of 23 international experts across precision medicine, cardiometabolic diseases, statistics, editorial and lived experience to develop a reporting guideline for precision medicine that emphasises community engagement and equity, published in *Nature Medicine* (DOI: 10.1038/s41591-024-03033-3).



Dr Siew Lim

ADDRESSING EQUITY IN GESTATIONAL DIABETES MELLITUS (GDM)

HS&E Investigators: Siew Lim, Rajshree Thapa, Heidi Ng, and Jacqueline Boyle

Students: Gebresilasea Ukke, Wubet Takele, Yuqi Dou, Jiancheng Zeng, Xue Peng

Funding sources: Vanguard grants, international student scholarships

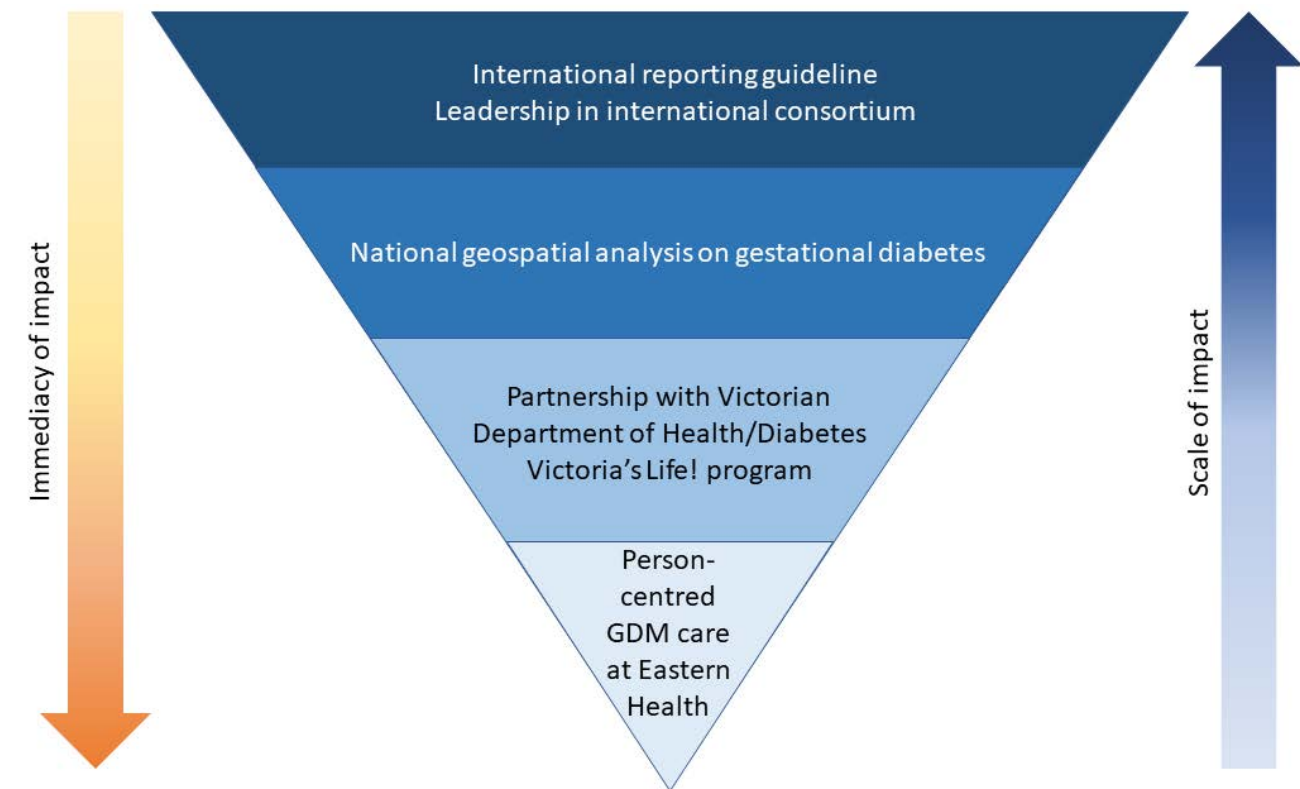
Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) affects 9–26% of pregnancies globally, with prevalence on the rise. Women who experience GDM are at significantly increased risk of chronic disease and these risks are amplified among women from non-Western European backgrounds and those with lower socioeconomic status. To address these inequities, we are leading a multi-level program of work (see figure below).

Internationally, we contributed to a commissioned project for the American Diabetes Association and European Association for the Study of Diabetes, synthesising evidence on T2DM prevention after GDM.

At the national level, we conducted geospatial analyses identifying GDM hotspots and trends across Australia, revealing how geography and environment shape health outcomes.

In Victoria, our partnership with Diabetes Victoria evaluated the *Life!* program for women with prior GDM, identifying underserved groups and strategies to improve engagement.

Locally at Eastern Health, we led an experience-based co-design study with Chinese women—who are up to five times more likely to develop GDM than Australian-born women of Western background—in the Eastern Health catchment. Using photovoice interviews, we co-developed culturally tailored approaches to improve service delivery and program access. We have also initiated a research study on studying the impact of GDM on patient-reported outcomes, including quality of life and stigma, among antenatal care patients at Eastern Health.



Our knowledge-to-impact research program on gestational diabetes

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS IN OUR REGION

We are building international partners and networks, particularly focused in our region through a range of activities. In addition to the establishment of the Western Pacific Preconception Health Network A/Prof Boyle and Dr Lim are co-leading work in women’s health in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand and A/Prof Boyle and Dr Thapa are leading an implementation research program in diabetes and hypertension in Nepal.

WOMEN’S HEALTH INCUBATOR (WHINC): A COLLABORATION WITH ACTION LAB AND SEACO (MONASH UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA)

HS&E Investigators: Siew Lim, Jacqueline Boyle

The Women’s Health INCubator (WHinc) project is a collaborative project with investigators at Action Lab Monash and Monash Malaysia and is based at four health demographic surveillance systems in Malaysia (SEACO), Indonesia (Sleman), Thailand (Kanchanaburi) and Bangladesh (Matlab).

We are building a prototype on community participatory processes in developing data platforms for the HDSSs and are using women’s reproductive health as an exemplar.

WOMEN’S HEALTH PRIORITY SETTING AND THE WOMEN’S HEALTH RESEARCH NETWORK MALAYSIA

HS&E Investigators: Jacqueline Boyle and Siew Lim

In July 2024, Monash University Malaysia and Monash University Australia co-hosted a Women’s Health Research Symposium 2024 at the Clinical School Johor Bahru campus of Monash Malaysia. This two day symposium brought together researchers from Monash with a diverse group of external stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health (Maternal and Child Health, community clinics, and hospitals), the Ministry of Education (Universiti Malaya Medical Centre), external agencies (United Nations University), and NGOs such as the Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM) and Johor Outreach and Community Centre for refugee communities aiming to identify key priorities in women’s health, what are the key resources, platforms and supports required and how can we increase broader collaboration to work together to address these challenges.

An important outcome from this symposium was the need to develop a network for Women’s Health Research in Malaysia which has now been established and A/Prof Boyle and Dr Lim are international members of the network.



<https://www.monash.edu.my/pages/latest/articles/2024/womens-health-in-focus-monash-university-leads-the-way-in-malaysia>

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/3885028/Womens-Health-Malaysia-report_symposium-report.pdf

HRIDAYA: CO-DESIGNING MULTI-LEVEL INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE CONTINUUM OF CARE FOR HYPERTENSION AND DIABETES IN NEPAL

HS&E investigators: Rajshree Thapa and Jacqueline Boyle

Funders: Global Alliance of Chronic Disease , NHMRC

In 2024 we began the HRIDAYA project designed to increase identification of adults in the community with diabetes and hypertension in three municipalities across Nepal. This project aims to improve ongoing care and management after diagnosis through understanding how to connect community and services and utilise community health workers and female community health volunteers. We are working closely in country with the Nepal Development Society (NeDS). We undertook extensive stakeholder engagement and have had the opportunity to share learnings with other international GACD projects in the Healthy Cities Stream and with other GACD funded projects in chronic disease in other streams in Nepal.

A/Prof Boyle has been voted in as a co-chair of the Healthy Cities Stream.



ENDOMETRIOSIS IN PRIORITY POPULATIONS: CO-DESIGN OF RESOURCES AND DISSEMINATION PATHWAYS

HS&E investigators: Siew Lim, Heidi Ng, and Jacqueline Boyle

Funders: Endometriosis Australia

Endometriosis affects 1 in 9 women and those assigned female at birth (AFAB) in Australia, and a recent study found most social media posts on endometriosis included incorrect information relating to diagnosis, symptoms and treatment. This is further compounded for those facing cultural, linguistic, or other systemic barriers. Those who do not speak English as a first language and those who are transgender and gender-diverse have increased risk of endometriosis compared with the European White female population. Given these unmet needs, in July 2024, we began co-designing with Chinese women and AFAB individuals to develop a list of recommendations for Endometriosis Australia to adapt their resources to ensure they are culturally-integrated and gender-inclusive, meeting the needs of these priority groups.

To finish off, this is a photo of the very hard-working HS&E team.



PERSON-CENTRED RESEARCH

DIRECTOR: A/PROF SANDRA NOLTE

The Person-Centred Research Directorate is the latest addition to Eastern Health Clinical School, launched in August 2024. The Directorate’s mission is to give a voice to patients – and consumers more broadly – by advancing research methods and providing education on patient-reported outcome and patient-reported experience measures (PROMs and PREMs) for application in clinical practice and research. Focus of our work is the development, translation and cross-cultural adaptation, validation and implementation of PROMs and PREMs.

The Directorate is headed up by A/Prof Sandra Nolte (pictured below). Sandra has worked in the PROM field for over 20 years and comes to Monash University with an extensive network, especially across Europe and North America. Prior to joining EHCS, Sandra worked at a range of institutions in academia, the non-profit sector and PROM research consulting, including six years as Director of the Center for Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (CPCOR) at Charité University Medicine Berlin and three years as Director Patient-Centred Outcomes at ICON plc in London. Sandra has worked across many key international PROM initiatives, including projects of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) Quality of Life Group, the Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System (PROMIS®) and the International Consortium of Health Outcomes Measurement (ICHOM). She is a current member of the Advisory Board of Movember’s Pan Cancer Real Evidence Network and President-Elect of the International Society for Quality of Life Research (ISOQOL).

Since its official launch in August 2024, the main focus of the Directorate was on strategy and continuation of existing PROM projects and initiatives, and grant acquisition. We were pleased to have won a major EORTC grant in 2024, with Sandra as Lead-PI, on evidence generation for the assessment of side effect burden in cancer. The grant is shared with the EORTC Quality of Life Department at the EORTC Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, with funding for a quantitative research fellow allocated to our Directorate and a qualitative research fellow allocated to the team in Brussels. In addition, Sandra is collaborator on a EuroQoL research grant awarded to Prof Kim Dalziel (University of Melbourne) on strength-based item wording in paediatric PROMs. Finally, we submitted a further EORTC grant, the first stage of an ARC grant in collaboration with the EHCS Health Systems and Equity Directorate and the Monash Faculty of Arts, and Sandra is collaborator on an MRFF grant, with announcements for all submissions expected in early 2025.

In September/October 2024, Sandra travelled to Europe to attend the bi-annual EORTC Quality of Life Group meeting that took place in Innsbruck, Austria. These meetings are key networking events where we also officially launched aforementioned EORTC side effect burden project. While in Europe, Sandra attended the annual conference of ISOQOL in Cologne, Germany, where she presented some of her work, chaired two sessions and attended the ISOQOL Board meeting where she was inaugurated as President-Elect of the society. ISOQOL is the pre-eminent international society for quality of life / PROM research, with many members being instrumental in shaping the PROM field since ISOQOL’s launch in the 1990s. It is a huge privilege having been elected to serve the society and help shape its future.

2024 has also seen the end of some major international collaborations and the start of new ones. The former includes an international collaboration on a comprehensive review of state-of-the-art research methods and recommendations by payers and regulatory authorities on the interpretation of PROM-derived change scores, commonly referred to as ‘minimal important differences’. The project was initiated by members of the Drug Information Association (DIA) with a collaborator from AstraZeneca and Sandra being the main drivers to finalise the review and associated manuscript that had been in the making for over three years. In addition, we set up a long-term collaborative project in paediatric PROMs with the Royal Children’s Hospital on the assessment of self-reported health in children with cancer and their caregivers as well as survivors of childhood cancer.



HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS

EVIDENCE GENERATION FOR EORTC SIDE EFFECT BURDEN ITEM Q168

Investigators: Sandra Nolte, Claire Piccinin (Brussels, Belgium)

Funding: EORTC Quality of Life Group

EORTC item Q168 and FACT-G item GP5 are recommended by the US Food and Drug Administration as one example of assessing patient-reported side effect burden from cancer treatment by use of a single item. However, clear evidence of the use of single items to assess patients’ side effect burden is still scarce. This project aims to fill this gap. By applying qualitative and quantitative research methods, this project aims to generate evidence in support of (or potentially refute) the use of single items on side effect burden as part of clinical trials and research.

UPDATE OF THE EORTC QLQ REFERENCE VALUES MANUAL (REFVAL)

Investigators: Susanne Singer (Mainz, Germany), Monika Sztankay (Innsbruck, Austria), collaborator: Sandra Nolte

Funding: EORTC Quality of Life Group; collaborators are not funded but provide in-kind support

Reference data in form of reference values obtained from cancer patients and normative data from the general population of a specific region or country greatly enhance the interpretation of PROM-derived data assessed from cancer patients. To ensure that the reference values used continue to be a solid source for research and clinical practice, the current version of the EORTC QLQ Reference Manual (published in 2008) needs to be updated and modernised. The present EORTC-funded project addresses this task.

DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF EORTC QUALITY OF LIFE MEASURES FOR CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH CANCER (AYA) AS WELL AS SURVIVORS OF CHILDHOOD CANCER

Investigators: Anne-Sophie Darlington (Southampton, UK), Samantha Sodergren (Southampton, UK), David Riedl (Innsbruck, Austria), collaborator: Sandra Nolte

Funding: EORTC Quality of Life Group; collaborators are not funded directly but provide in-kind support; for data collection, collaborators are reimbursed by the EORTC

The EORTC is currently developing a range of health-related quality of life instruments for children and AYA. Part of the development process is the testing of the new instruments in various countries, including Australia. In collaboration with the Royal Children’s Hospital, we are interviewing Australian children, AYA, childhood cancer survivors, parents and healthcare providers to generate evidence for the use of these newly developed EORTC measures.

DEVELOPMENT OF AN EORTC INTERPRETATION GUIDELINE FOR THE EORTC PRO MEASURES

Investigators: Monika Sztankay (Innsbruck, Austria), collaborator: Sandra Nolte

Funding: EORTC Quality of Life Group; collaborators are not funded but provide in-kind support

The assessment of PRO data in clinical practice and research has proven to be beneficial for patient outcomes. By offering guidance on interpretation, the EORTC Quality of Life Group aims to support the use of PRO data assessed with its measures. To meet the need for practical guidelines on how to differentiate and use the various ways of interpreting EORTC PRO data, this project aims to develop a guideline including best practice recommendations on interpreting PROs assessed with EORTC PRO measures for scientific as well as clinical use.

MONASH ADDICTION RESEARCH CENTRE

DIRECTOR: PROF DAN LUBMAN AM
DEPUTY DIRECTOR: PROF SUZANNE NIELSEN

The Monash Addiction Research Centre (MARC) has 146 academic members across 30 departments in six faculties and three institutes, making it one of the largest addiction research centres in the world.

MARC’s mission is to provide research excellence, national thought leadership, and education to develop, deliver and evaluate effective policy and practice approaches for addiction.

In FY2024, MARC members across Monash University secured 18M for addiction-related research and published over 200 peer-reviewed articles. This success demonstrates the enormous impact MARC members are making in the field of addiction and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in finding solutions to the challenges of addiction.

In May, MARC held the inaugural 2024 MARC Emerging Researcher Symposium, bringing together early to mid-career researchers and PhD students engaged in addiction-related research from across Monash University. Highlights included an inspiring keynote by A/Prof Shalini Arunogiri (Clinical Director of the Hamilton Centre, Victoria’s Statewide Centre for Mental Health and Addiction) on the career paths of clinician-researchers. Valuable insights and advice on academic publishing were shared through a panel discussion with Prof Paul Dietze (co-Director of the Disease Elimination Program, Burnet Institute, and Head of the Melbourne office of the National Drug Research Institute (NDRI)), Prof Suzanne Nielsen (Deputy Director, MARC), Dr Tina Lam (Senior Research Fellow, MARC), and panel moderator Dr Louisa Picco (MARC, NHMRC Emerging Leader Research Fellow).

The number of talented PhD students based at the Peninsula Campus continued to grow and thrive, with 10 HDR students under the supervision of Prof Nielsen, Dr Xia and Dr Picco, including 4 external PhD candidates. In August the MARC PhD network committee hosted a webinar on ‘International Drug Policy’. We were thrilled to watch network members share their expertise on how drug policies are enacted worldwide.

In 2024, MARC strengthened its policy and advocacy work by actively engaging with state and federal government inquiries, including submissions to the Australian Parliament’s Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sports’ Inquiry into the health impacts of alcohol and other drugs in Australia and the Victorian Department of Justice and Community consultation on gaming (poker) machine monitoring arrangements.



MARC Theme Leaders



MARC Hub Staff

INAUGURAL MARC EMERGING RESEARCHER SYMPOSIUM PRIZE WINNERS

Best PhD Presentation – Richard Armour for the presentation titled ‘Performance of the Medical Priority Dispatch System in identifying patients requiring chest compressions at overdose prevention services: a retrospective cohort study”



Best EMCR Presentation –Dr Tejashree Kangutkar for the presentation titled “Perceived Factors Affecting the Oral Health Care Experience of People Who Use Drugs and Potential Strategies for Addressing These Barriers”



Congratulations to the following MARC members who won prizes in FY2024

- Shalini Arunogiri (Clinical Director, Turning Point) – 2023 Victorian Young Tall Poppy Science Award
- Monica Jung (MARC PhD candidate) - Best Presentation Award at the Eastern Health Clinical School ECR Showcase.
- Jenna Yang (MARC PhD candidate and PhD network vice-chair – People’s Choice Award at the Eastern Health Clinical School 3-Minute Thesis (3MT)
- Dr Louisa Picco (MARC Research Fellow) – 2024 William and Katherine Winter travel scholarship.

RESEARCH FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

TRANSFORMING OPIOID POISONING SURVEILLANCE THROUGH NOVEL TECHNOLOGIES

MARC Investigators: Dr Ting Xia, Dr Joanna Dipnall, Dr Jane Hayman, Dr Tina Lam, Prof Suzanne Nielsen, A/Prof Richard Beare, Prof Paul Dietze, A/Prof Nick Scott, Prof Mark Stoove, Dr Amanda Roxburgh

Funder: The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) – Ideas Grant

Opioid-related mortality in Australia has doubled in the past decade. In response, a range of policy changes were made to urgently address growing opioid-related harm. Emergency Department (ED) have enormous potential for drug harm and injury surveillance, yet inadequate coding ED prevent its use to understand policy outcomes.

Our project will transform the coding of ED data using innovative natural language processing approaches without adding extra work for clinicians or changing current practices. NLP algorithms enable the automated analysis of narrative or unstructured text, allowing computers to interpret, process, and understand human language. This will enhance the accuracy and detail of ED data. This innovative approach to ED data opens the door to entirely new questions about policy performance, providing valuable insights to guide future policy decisions.

The project is a collaboration between Monash University the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit (VISU), the National Centre for Healthy Ageing (NCHA, Peninsula Health), and Alfred Health.



USING WEB SCRAPING TO CONSTRUCT A WORLD-FIRST ALCOHOL RETAIL PRICING SYSTEM TO INFORM EVIDENCE-BASED ALCOHOL POLICIES

MARC Investigators: Dr Tina Lam, Prof Dennis Petrie, Dr Brian Vandenberg, Prof Suzanne Nielsen

Funder: Monash Data Futures Institute

Alcohol is the leading risk factor for premature death and disability among people aged 15-49, and is one of the leading preventable causes of community harms such as family violence. Globally, government policies related to raising prices have been the most effective and least costly interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm, in both general and high-risk populations. However, policy makers do not have access to real time price information for the development and evaluation of price policies.

Our project will use web scraping technology to monitor daily fluctuations in prices across the Australian alcohol retail sector (~100M rows of price data per year). We will provide the most comprehensive price-based examinations of the retail alcohol market available across any for-profit economy, in order to inform the implementation of effective health policies to prevent alcohol harm.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM COMPLETED RESEARCH PROJECTS

ENHANCING PHARMACIST INVOLVEMENT IN CARE (EPIC) MATOD IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

MARC Investigators: Prof Suzanne Nielsen, Dr Ali Cheetham, Kirsty Morgan

Funder: Alcohol and Drug Research Innovation Agenda (ADRIA)

The Enhancing Pharmacist Involvement in Care for Medication Assisted Treatment of Opioid Dependence ('EPIC-MATOD') project was initiated to explore how to better utilise the pharmacist workforce to improve access to MATOD. To leverage the role of community pharmacists, a collaborative model of care was co-designed with input from clinical experts, peak professional bodies, and consumer organisations. The EPIC-MATOD implementation study aimed to determine the clinical effectiveness, feasibility, and acceptability of the EPIC-MATOD model.

In total, 13 pharmacists and four prescribers provided collaborative care to 36 patients over a 6-month period, with outcomes compared to a non-randomised comparison group of 49 patients receiving MATOD via usual practice. Results supported the hypothesis that pharmacist-led collaborative care could provide comparable clinical outcomes to usual care (with 97.2% of collaborative care patients retained in treatment compared to 89.8% in the comparison arm), and was associated with significant increases in treatment satisfaction and quality adjusted life years (QALYs).

Interviews with pharmacists, prescribers and patients supported that collaborative care was feasible and acceptable, with high levels of support from all three groups. A health economics assessment found the model was cost-effective compared to treatment as usual.

Work is now underway support further implementation of the model through developing co-designed implementation strategies to facilitate the uptake of the model in other geographic regions of Australia where similar treatment barriers exist

ENABLING EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICY TO ADDRESS AUSTRALIA'S OPIOID CRISIS

MARC Investigators: Prof Suzanne Nielsen, Prof Simon Bell, Prof Grant Russell, Dr Samanta Lalic, Prof Rachelle Buchbinder, A/Prof Nadine Andrew, A/Prof Christopher Pearce, Prof Dan Lubman, A/Prof Jenni Ilomaki, Dr Ting Xia, Dr Monica Jung, Helena Cangadis-Douglass

Funder: The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) – Ideas Grant

Policies restricting opioid supply have recently been implemented to address rising opioid-related deaths in Australia, with limited research to understand of the impact of these policies. Over the past 3 years, our research has made significant advancements to understand the impact of opioid policy and related opioid prescribing changes have influenced opioid harm and other health outcomes by leveraging the linkage of a unique primary care dataset with hospital data.

This work provided the first evidence of a possible substitution effect following the recent implementation of the prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP), identifying an increase in the prescribing of non-monitored pain medicines.

Evidence of reduced opioid-related emergency department (ED) visits was found, alongside a short-term increase in ED visits related to other substances following the implementation of opioid policies in Victoria. This work serves as a foundation for further evaluation of various system-level policies and interventions on opioid use and harms. In addition, some of the first studies of opioid taper trajectories identified a range of key patient-level factors associated with completed opioid tapering, which brought into question current opinion-based practise in consensus guidelines. This work has informed where further research is needed into how to most effectively taper opioids in clinical practice, including risk stratifying patients and identifying those who may benefit from additional support.

This body of work has resulted in 12 peer-reviewed publications in prestigious journals (e.g., Pain, International Journal of Drug Policy and MJA), contributing to the fields of drug policy, public health and clinical practice, and an additional several manuscripts are currently under review/development

Selected publications (full list available at) <https://www.monash.edu/medicine/ehcs/marc/research/current/enabling-evidence-informed-policy-to-address-australias-opioid-crisis>)

Nielsen S, Picco L, Rowland B, Andrew N, Collyer T, Lalic S, Buchbinder R, Pearce C, Bell S, Lubman D, & Xia T. The impact of opioid policies on emergency department presentations and hospital admissions: A controlled interrupted time series analysis. MJA. 2025 (accepted).

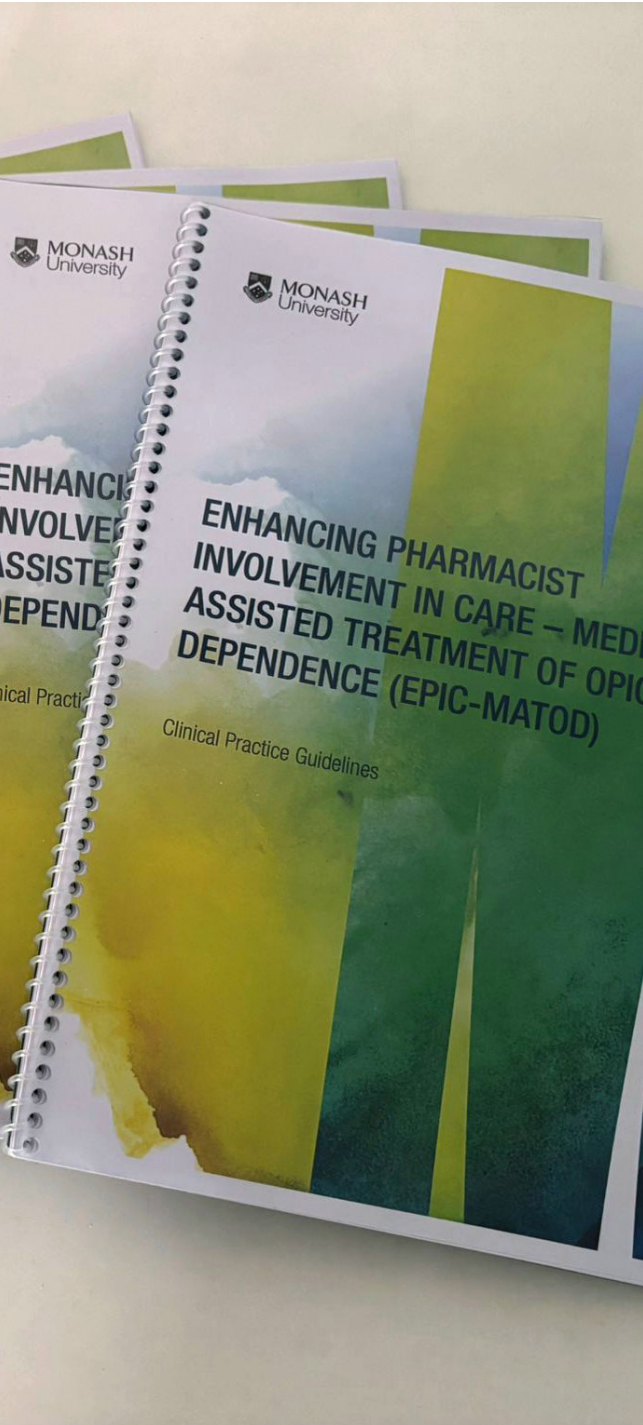
Cangadis-Douglass H, Xia T, Bell JS, Nielsen S. Impact of codeine rescheduling on prescribing of codeine and other opioids: Interrupted time series analyses using Australian general practice data. Br J Clin Pharmacol. 2024; 1-9. doi:10.1111/bcp.16246

Xia T, Picco L, Buchbinder R, Haas R, Nielsen S. (2024). Association of state-level prescription drug monitoring program implementation with opioid prescribing transitions in primary care in Australia. Br J Clin Pharmacol. 2024; 90(4): 1162-1172. doi:10.1111/bcp.15996.

Nielsen, S., & Xia, T. (2024). Interventions for reducing the prescribing of pharmaceutical opioids in Australia: are they effectively reducing opioid harm? The Medical Journal of Australia, 220(6), 311-312. <https://doi.org/10.5694/mja2.52259>

Jung M, Xia T, Ilomäki J, Pearce C, Nielsen S. (2024). Opioid characteristics and nonopioid interventions associated with successful opioid taper in patients with chronic noncancer pain. Pain. 2024 Jun 1;165(6):1327-1335. doi: 10.1097/j.pain.0000000000003133. Epub 2023 Dec 19. PMID: 38112755; PMCID: PMC11090027.

Nielsen S, Picco L, Russell G, Pearce C, Andrew N, Lubman D, Bell S, Buchbinder R & Xia T. (2023). Changes in opioid and other analgesic prescribing following voluntary and mandatory prescription drug monitoring program implementation: A time series analysis of early outcomes. International Journal of Drug Policy, 117. DOI: 10.1016/j.drugpo.2023.104053



LABORATORY PROGRAM

The EHCS laboratory is located at 5 Arnold St, and is staffed by Dr Pavel Sluka and Mr Hady Wardan. The facilities in the laboratory support tissue culture, flow cytometry, cell sorting, ELISA, microscopy, qPCR, droplet digital PCR, and reverse phase liquid chromatography. The laboratory has functional links with services at the Monash Clayton campus and with other collaborators, enabling access to a broad range of technology platforms.

The facilities provide support for anyone needing it. Clinical trial study coordinators often need to process biological samples such as blood, and store them temporarily or for longer periods. This requires suitable facilities with refrigerated centrifuges, fume hood, refrigerators, -20°C and -80°C freezers, and liquid nitrogen dewars in a room with dedicated air handling. The Box Hill site also hosts a node of the Victorian Cancer Biobank.

Laboratory staff support staff and students, including higher degree research students, undertaking basic and translational research. They can assist with laboratory induction, laboratory training, supervision, experimental design and conduct, and interpretation of results. They manage and maintain the facilities, including development of risk assessments and risk mitigation strategies.

Most of the work in the laboratory in 2024 related to the uro-oncology translational research program, headed by Prof Ian Davis and Prof Shomik Sengupta. The group concentrated in 2024 primarily on urothelial cancers, developing and validating a method for the detection of tumour-derived DNA in blood and urine. This work is supported by an NHMRC Investigator Grant L3 held by Prof Davis, and is designed to improve diagnosis, monitor response to treatment, and allow personalisation of therapy by intensifying treatment in those who need it, while minimising treatment for those who do not. Clinical trial proposals have been developed and are awaiting approval of grant funding.

Several other groups use the laboratory facilities, including nephrology, gastroenterology, endocrinology, haematology, and the ECRU Translational Research Division led by A/Prof Tony Dear.

We were delighted in November 2024 to welcome Dr Ed Kwan to the group. Ed is a medical oncologist and clinician-scientist, and is a world expert on prostate cancer genomics and circulating tumour DNA. He has returned from Vancouver where he undertook postdoctoral training in the lab of Dr Alex Wyatt at the Vancouver Prostate Centre at the University of British Columbia.

Ed has taken up a clinical position in medical oncology at Eastern Health, and a Monash appointment shared between EHCS and the Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute. Ed holds a Synergy grant fellowship from ANZUP Cancer Trials Group and will grow his research program in Melbourne. This is likely to become a major focus for the uro-oncology laboratory program.



Hady Wardan and Dr Pavel Sluka



Dr Edmond Kwan



RESEARCH VIGNETTE

DR WEE-KHENG SOO – GERIATRIC ONCOLOGY

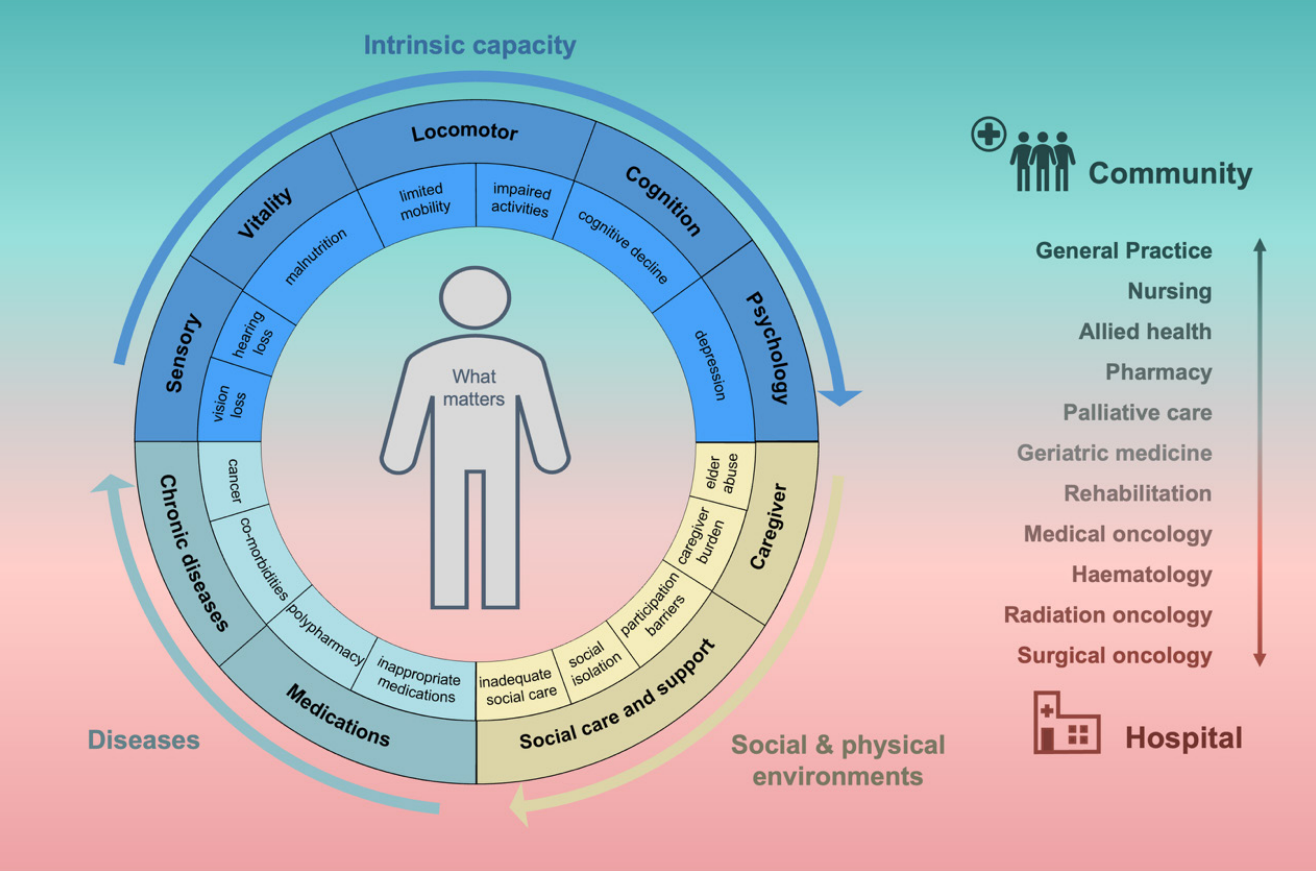
Geriatric oncology made significant strides in research activities in 2024, with multiple projects at various stages addressing key challenges in the care of older adults with cancer. A systematic review on comprehensive geriatric assessment in cancer surgery was submitted for publication, providing evidence to enhance perioperative care for this population. Two major works are being developed into full-length articles: one explores integrated survivorship care for older people with cancer, while the other focuses on strategies targeting frailty and resilience to improve quality of life. These efforts aim to provide deeper insights into these emerging and impactful areas of care.

Collaborative efforts across national and international initiatives significantly broadened the department's reach and impact. A key project included a health economic analysis led by the University of Toronto, evaluating the cost-effectiveness of geriatric oncology interventions across multiple randomised controlled trials, including the INTEGERATE study at Eastern Health. A partnership with A/Prof Sandra Nolte, head of the newly established Person-Centred Research Directorate at Eastern Health Clinical School, resulted in an invitation to submit a grant application to the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) for the multi-national validation of the Elderly Functional Index (ELFI). This highlights the growing international interest in ELFI's potential to advance patient-reported outcomes and care models for older cancer patients. Nationally, significant progress was made on the Australian Optimal Care Pathway for Older Adults with Cancer, with Eastern Health clinicians helping to shape its development. The pathway aims to provide a standardised framework for delivering consistent, high-quality care to older patients across Australia.

New projects for the upcoming year were set in motion to address emerging priorities. These include validating an electronic physical performance battery and a pharmacy-led project examining medication optimisation and pharmacogenomics in older adults with cancer. Building on these initiatives, the ANZUP Synchrony Fellowship was awarded to Dr Kheng Soo to advance research in frailty assessment and quality of life for prostate cancer patients.



Dr Wee-Kheng Soo



This illustration shows the interconnected factors influencing older adults with cancer, highlighting the importance of a holistic, person-centred approach to care. It reflects Eastern Health Clinical School's commitment to improving health outcomes through education and research, which advances integrated care models that prioritise "what matters" to patients and draw on multidisciplinary expertise across hospital and community settings. (Soo WK et al., Lancet Healthy Longevity 4: e243-e245, 2023).

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

AGED MEDICINE RESEARCH AND TEACHING

PROF PĒTERIS DĀRZIŅŠ

ACTIONABLE DASHBOARDS ACCREDITATION PROJECT (ADAPT) COMPLETION

Last year, the progress of this work was reported and that has now been completed. This project translated the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards into a suite of dashboards to reflect the standards, providing near real time measurement and monitoring of organisational status.

All health consumers have the right to expect and receive safe and high-quality care that meet expected standards of safety and quality. The ADAPt platform of a complete suite of dashboards that reflect the eight NSQHS Standards, unifies disparate data sources and automates the calculation and information required for each NSQHS standard quality measure and its supporting metrics. The platform provides information across the entire health service's patient population, enabling accurate and near real-time insights for continuous quality and safety assurance.

The ADAPt collaboration was funded through the Digital Health Collaborative Research Centre (DHCRC-0108), led and managed by Monash (FMNHS through Eastern Health Clinical School, and the Faculty of IT) with collaborating partners Eastern Health, the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS), and the Victorian Department of Health. This collaboration saw the successful design, development, delivery and evaluation of a solution to address complex and resource intensive NSQHS assessment activity experienced by over 1,300 public and private hospital and health facilities across Australia.

The Monash University team (Eastern Health Clinical School and FIT) provided the project management and academic expertise to coordinate all elements of the project, contribute critical skills in complex data management and analytics and frame the implementation science context for project evaluation. As the health service partner, EH provided real EMR data which was central to the project. Monash data scientists worked closely with EH teams to ensure a profound understanding of data architecture, frame data extraction processes and secure storage and management in an ADAPt specific data warehouse.



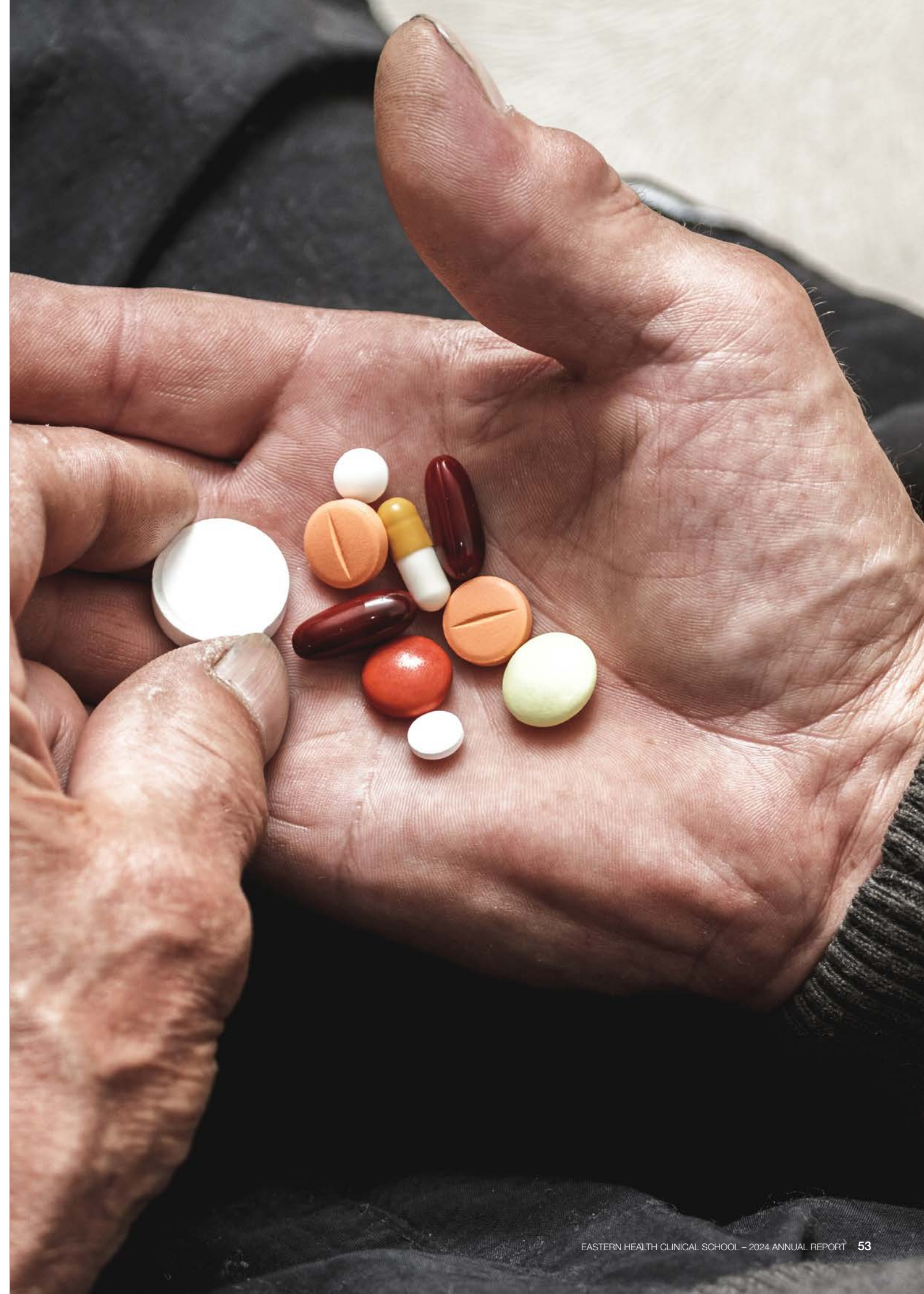
Locally, completion of this project has seen ADAPt dashboards endorsed by EH Risk Governance Committees, implemented and managed internally as "Business as Usual", and now in day-to-day use for maintaining and improving quality of care. Impacts have been observed in many ways. For example, using this near-real-time data, staff were able to identify improvements and implement interventions iteratively, which allowed observable improved outcomes 4-5 months earlier than if following the previous quarterly quality and safety audit cycle. Staff surveys and focus groups described how the platform provides rapid access to information, allows contemporary and historical data to be viewed and compared, with efficient interpretation of the data through user-friendly visualisations.

More significantly, the success of the collaboration has led to commitment by all current partners to take the work to the next step and fund an implementation trial in other settings as a precursor to possible commercialisation of the work. All partners have contributed more funding to facilitate ongoing work until late 2026 at this stage and possibly further depending on results of next steps. The existing set of project partners will continue to lead this work as the collaboration established has been eminently successful.

Even though the project timeline was from July 2022-June 2025 it was only funded to March 2025, but we have successfully completed it meeting all milestones and deliverables within the budget provided.

EHCS has provided significant clinical and research expertise into this project with several staff involved including Ian Davis and Peteris Darzins as Chief Investigators, Greg Duncan as the project manager and Cathy Ngo and Al Shahsavand as research fellows. EHCS will continue to play a leading role in the next steps with this work as implantation in other settings is explored.

If you would like to discuss the project or explore potential applications, please contact the project manager Greg Duncan (Gregory.duncan@monash.edu).



CARDIOLOGY

DR JENNIFER COOKE

OUR TEAM:

- Dr Jennifer Cooke, Head of Cardiology
- Dr Jason Nogie, Clinical Lead, Cardiac Intervention
- A/Prof Jaya Chandrasekhar
- A/Prof Andrew Teh
- Dr Melanie Freeman

Clinical research is a key pillar of Eastern Health’s cardiology department, with a wide range of projects covering areas from smartwatch technology to interventional trials. Several new clinical trials were launched in 2024, and we continue to participate in established cardiac registries at the state, national, and international levels.

Under the leadership of Dr Jennifer Cooke as the local Principal Investigator, EH has partnered with researchers at Deakin University and three other Victorian Health Services in the SAFE HF trial. This innovative trial provides heart failure patients with ongoing support with a Nurse Practitioner in their own General Practice after hospital discharge.

Box Hill Cardiology has also joined a clinical trial in collaboration with our primary revascularisation service, aimed at patients suffering from acute heart attacks (STEMI). A/Prof Jaya Chandrasekhar leads EH’s contribution to this study, working with the University of Sydney, to explore the impact of thrombolytic therapy on STEMI patients after revascularisation to enhance long-term outcomes.

Our advanced trainees and cardiology staff regularly draw on registry data, and this year undertook a statewide analysis with the Monash University-based Victorian Cardiac Outcomes Registry, focusing on the rise in the use of drug-coated balloons in Victorian cardiac patients. This project is supervised by Dr Jason Nogie. Additionally, several of our cardiologists and cardiology staff had abstracts accepted for the annual Cardiac Society Australia New Zealand conference in Perth, as well an oral presentation for a clinical prize session at the Australia Cardiac Rehabilitation Association conference in Sydney.

EH continues its leadership in digital health, with A/Prof Andrew Teh and Dr Ed Wong conducting a crossover clinical trial comparing smartwatches to Holter monitors in patients with newly diagnosed palpitations. This trial is part of Dr. Wong’s Master of Philosophy. Additionally, Cardiology Advanced Trainee and PhD student Dr Tim Scully was awarded the Hayward Family Research and Innovation Grant from the Eastern Health Foundation for his research on cardiac amyloidosis in conduction disease.

CLINICAL TRIALS

SAFE HF - Translating heart Failure guidelines into practice: an RCT of a Nurse Practitioner primary care service – Dr Jennifer Cooke

RESTORE MI - Restoring microcirculatory perfusion in ST-elevation myocardial infarction – A/Prof Jaya Chandrasekhar

ASPIRE AF - Anticoagulation for Stroke Prevention In patients with Recent Episodes of perioperative Atrial Fibrillation after noncardiac surgery – A/Prof Jaya Chandrasekhar

SMART WATCH - Utility of smartwatches for investigation of the patient with palpitations – A/Prof Andrew Teh

INTER/NATIONAL RESEARCH REGISTRIES

ANZ-SCAD – Australian and New Zealand Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection registry

CAN-SCAN – Canadian Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection registry

ABC Registry Prospective Australasian National Bifurcation Coronary Intervention Outcomes Registry

VCOR/MIG – Victorian Cardiac Outcomes Registry/ Melbourne Interventional Group

DERMATOLOGY

PROF JOHN SU

CLINICAL TRIALS

Investigators: J Su, A Courtney, A Li, D Weerakkody
Coordinators: A Fiora, A Murray, S San Jose

- A Phase 3, 52-week, Multicenter, Randomized, Placebo-controlled, Double-blind Study to Assess the Efficacy, Safety and Tolerability of Rocatinlimab in Adult Subjects With Prurigo Nodularis (PN) Who are Inadequately Controlled on Topical Therapies or Not Eligible for Topical Therapies
- RAY902CT, Phase IB open label basket trial of RAY121 to inhibit classical complement pathway in immunological diseases (RAINBOW TRIAL)
- A Phase 2, Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Study to Investigate the Efficacy and Safety of PF-07275315 and PF-07264660 in Adult Participants with Moderate-Severe Atopic Dermatitis
- A Phase 3, Randomized, 24-week, Placebo-controlled, Double-blind Study to Assess the Efficacy, Safety and Tolerability of Rocatinlimab (AMG 451) Monotherapy in Adult Subjects With Moderate-to-severe Atopic Dermatitis (AD) (ROCKET-Horizon)
- ASLAN004-003: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Multicenter, Dose-Ranging Trial to Evaluate the Efficacy and Safety ofASLAN004 (Eblasakimab)in Adult Patients with Moderate-to-Severe Atopic Dermatitis.(Aslan)
- Pedistad Evaluation of biomarkersof atopic dermatitis in pediatric patients whose disease is not adequately controlled with topical prescription therapies or when those therapies are not medically advisable. (Sanofi)
- OBS15333: Prospective, observational, longitudinal study in pediatric patients with moderate to severe atopic dermatitis whose disease is not adequately controlled with topical therapies or when those therapies are not medically advisable. (Sanofi)
- M18-891Measure Up 2:A Phase 3 Randomized, Placebo-Controlled, Double-Blind Study to Evaluate Upadacitinib in Adolescent and Adult Subjects with Moderate toSevere Atopic Dermatitis. (Abbvie)
- PEBBLES study: an RCT to reduce the risk of asthma by prevention of eczema (University of Melbourne and Monash University collaboration, A. Lowe, J. Su (CI, Monash Uni), S. Dharmage, M. Tang.)

INVESTIGATOR-LED RESEARCH AND SUPERVISION OF HIGHER LEARNING

MPHIL STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EHCS

- Courtney A. (MPhil). Supervisors: Su J, Yazdabadi A. Addressing disparities in health care for atopic dermatitis.
- Gaston J. (MPhil). Supervisors: Su J, Yazdabadi A. Determinants of outcomes for Atopic Dermatitis.
- Weerakkody D (MPhil). Supervisors: Su J, Cao R. Psychological management for Atopic Dermatitis.

PHD STUDENTS (NOT EHCS)

- Natalie Chung and Qing Chong (University of Melbourne). Su J. external supervisor.
- Navigating the Path to Medicine: A Review of Australian Medical School Admissions Websites. Yazdabadi A.

EDUCATION

- We continue to host the annual Eczema pre-ASM workshop at the Australasian College of Dermatologist Annual Scientific Meeting and also the Eczema school for public education.
- We have been selected to host the International Society of Atopic Dermatitis Congress in Melbourne in October 2025 (Chair J Su, Vice-chair A Yazdabadi)
- Drs Ly and Van Ammers have produced a podcast on Spotify on skin biopsy to assist junior medical staff at Eastern Health
- Dr Yazdabadi delivers the procedural dermatology workshop for Deakin Students at Eastern Health
- Dr Yazdabadi delivers bedside coaching for Monash Medical Students
- The department has worked with Eastern Health clinical school and has now formalised the hosting of 3rd and 5th year Monash Students in dermatology clinics
- Drs Yazdabadi, Ly and Le deliver the dermatology lectures for Monash medical school students.
- Dr Su represents Monash University EHCS for Dermatology MBBS, MD education at RVEEH lecture series

EASTERN CLINICAL RESEARCH UNIT TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH DIVISION (ECRU-TRD)

A/PROF ANTHONY DEAR

RESEARCH

TRANSLATIONAL

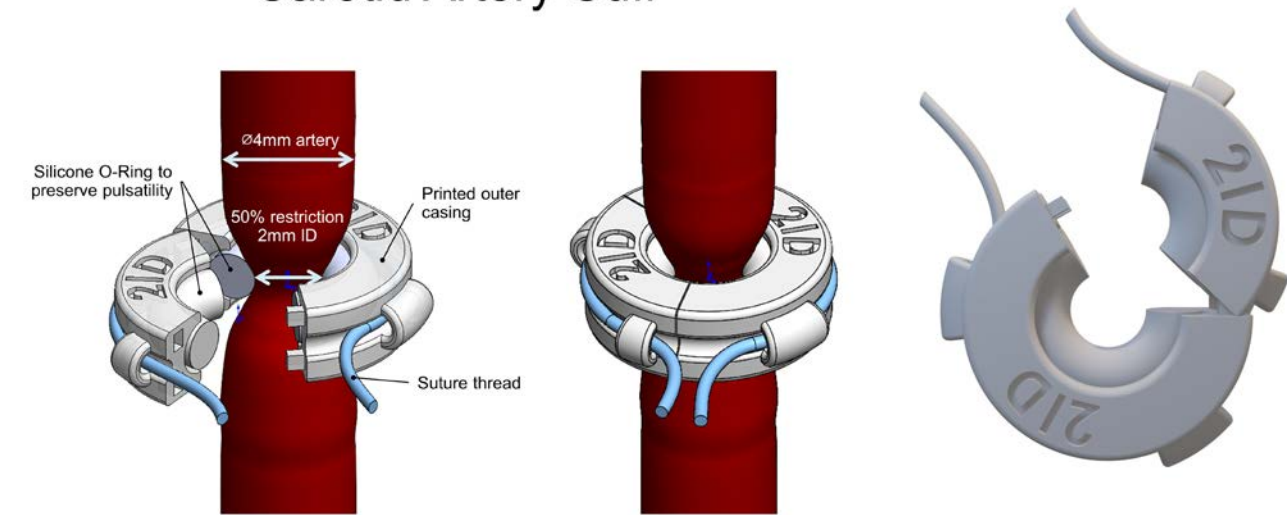
Lumi-Solve

The Unit's NH&MRC supported project, Lumi-Solve, a novel photo-angioplasty device for the treatment of *de-novo* and post angioplasty restenosis in peripheral vascular disease, made significant progress during 2024. In anticipation of *in-vivo* proof of concept studies undertaken by collaborators at the University of Queensland, a novel model component was designed and fabricated by the CREATElab at the Victorian Heart Hospital (VHI) using 3D printing technology. The cuff system, when applied to animal blood vessels, will produce narrowing's (stenosis) similar to those seen in the setting of human disease and will enable evaluation of the Lumi-Solve device.

2024 also witnessed publication of recent Lumi-Solve design and development advances aiding in key prototype development contributions and commercialisation of the device. In addition, a new collaboration with US fibre-optic company Pioneer Optics which aims to deliver an integrated fibre-optic activation package for the Lumi-Solve device.

(a)

Carotid Artery Cuff



(b)



(a) Illustration and (b) Deployment to an animal blood vessel of a novel cuff system to model arterial narrowing.

CLINICAL TRIALS AND PATIENT MANAGEMENT

METFORMIN IN ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM TRIAL (MAT)

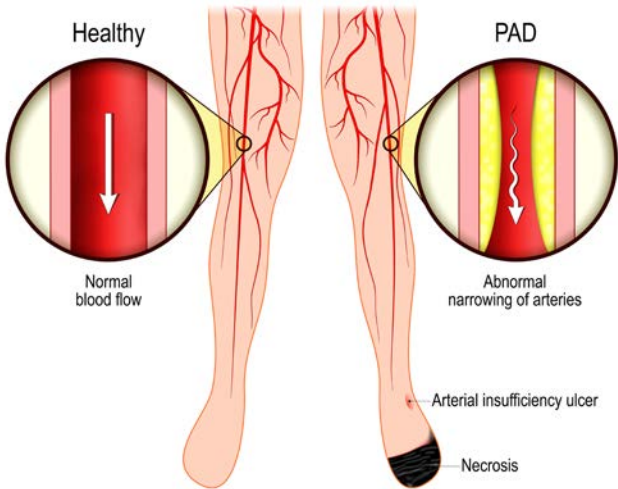
In 2024 the Unit continued to support the The **M**etformin in Abdominal aortic aneurysm **T**rial which aims to evaluate the well-established anti-diabetic medication metformin for its potential to offer, for the first time, the exciting prospect of a medical treatment to prevent abdominal aortic aneurysm AAA growth and rupture.

LOW DOSE COLCHICINE IN PATIENTS WITH PERIPHERAL ARTERY DISEASE TO ADDRESS RESIDUAL VASCULAR RISK (LEADER-PAD TRIAL)

The foundations of secondary prevention in peripheral artery disease (PAD) include lifestyle changes, risk factor modification and antithrombotic therapy. Despite the routine use of secondary prevention therapies, patients with PAD have an unacceptably high risk of acute vascular complications. Consequently, additional strategies to reduce their vascular risk are urgently required.

Although atherosclerosis is fundamentally a lipid-driven inflammatory disease, most interventions to prevent vascular events do not address this inflammatory mechanism. Colchicine, a low-cost anti-inflammatory drug, is effective and safe in reducing vascular events in patients with coronary artery disease (CAD) but it has not been tested in PAD. In the COLCOT and LoDoCo trials, colchicine significantly reduced cardiovascular (CV) events by at least 20% in (CAD) patients. Consequently, colchicine deserves further evaluation in patients with PAD, who are expected to derive an even greater benefit because of the more severe and extensive atherosclerosis. The Unit has been invited to participate in an international, prospective, randomized trial of over 6000 patients to evaluate the efficacy and safety of colchicine in reducing the incidence of cardiovascular death, myocardial infarction, stroke, or severe limb ischemia in people with PAD.

Peripheral artery disease



RESEARCH COMMERCIALISATION

Highlights of the Lumi-Solve research commercialisation programme for 2024 included successful lodgement of an Australian Provisional Patent in relation to specific aspects of Lumi-Solve fibre-optic delivery system design and development. In addition, partnering with prototype production companies POBA Medical (USA) and Pioneer Optics (USA) has facilitated evaluation of Lumi-Solve design specifications and manufacturing parameters for advanced prototype production preclinical and early-phase clinical studies.

Monash Innovation manager Dr Phil Lewis is leading the commercialisation strategy for Lumi-Solve and has identified potential commercial partners including MIMETIC, a medtech foundry together with Innovation Vascular Partners Consulting heralding an exciting next step in the development of the Lumi-solve device.

TEACHING AND EDUCATION

ECRU-TRD's interactive medical device programme has been expanded during 2024 enabling students and trainees to engage with real-world medical devices and 3D printed anatomy models to facilitate hands-on learning experiences as part of their medical, nursing and resident training.



4th year medical student Ethan Prabakaran utilises the 3D printed lower limb anatomy model for a simulated angioplasty procedure.

Dr Aaron Tran, a Monash Research Affiliate associated with the Unit over several years will be undertaking an MPhil Programme with ECRUTRD at EHCS focusing on aspects of the in-vivo evaluation of the Lumi-Solve device whilst also having successfully submitted a first author review of novel drug coatings for angioplasty therapy to *Current Vascular Pharmacology*. The Unit continues to contribute to EHCS HDR student assessment and aims to foster an environment supportive of academic endeavour at undergraduate and postgraduate levels through a broad range of translational research projects.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Unit continues to engage with the wider medical and general community through educational seminars and demonstration of various aspects of the Unit's activities including a recent display of 3D printed lower limb angioplasty device to medical educators and the wider University Medical Faculty in the Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology at the Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute.

USEFUL LINKS

- <https://www.monash.edu/lumi-solve>
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39707135/>

EASTERN HEALTH INTENSIVE CARE RESEARCH (EHICR)

A/PROF GRAEME DUKE

The EHICR Team continues to facilitate and support all research related activity across our three campuses, including ANZICS CTG trials and various local projects. We also continue to collaborate and support clinical trials led by other Specialities including the Emergency Department, Infectious Diseases, and Cardiology.

We thank the whole Intensive Care team for their ongoing hard work and contribution to the success of research at Eastern Health Intensive Care Services.

KEY CONTACTS

- A/Prof Graeme Duke – graeme.duke@easternhealth.org.au
- Dr Peter Chan – peter.chan@easternhealth.org.au
- Steven Hirth – steven.hirth@easternhealth.org.au
- Nicole Robertson – nicole.robertson@easternhealth.org.au
- Kym Gellie – kym.gellie@easternhealth.org.au

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ICU RESEARCH PROGRAM

TRIALS/LOCAL PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2024

- **RAISE** – A double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled study in conjunction with Neurology Service to evaluate the efficacy and safety of IV Ganaxolone in status epilepticus. Principal investigator: Patrick Carney (Neurology Consultant)
- **NUTRIENT 2** – Nutrition provision in critically ill adults. Principal Investigator: Graeme Duke (ICU Consultant), Stephanie Langton (ICU Dietitian), Nicole Robertson (ICU Research Manager) Kym Gellie (ICU Research Nurse)
- **Intensive care unit nurses' redeployment experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative study.** Lead investigator: Louise White (RN)

CURRENTLY ENROLLING MULTI-CENTRE TRIALS

- **REMAP-CAP** – International registry and platform trial of interventions for community acquired pneumonia. Principal Investigator: Joseph Vetro (ICU Consultant)
- **Mega-ROX** – MEGA randomised Registry Trial comparing conservative vs liberal oxygen targets. Principal Investigator: Niall Kennedy (ICU Consultant)
- **Bone Zone** – Randomised controlled trial, evaluating bone loss prevention with Zolendronic Acid or Denosumab in Critically Ill Adults. Principal Investigator: Peter Chan (ICU Consultant)
- **PRECISE** – PReCISION Ecmo in Cardiogenic Shock Evaluation. Principal Investigator: Arun Ilancheran (ICU Consultant)
- **ICU-Resolve** – Digital Peer Support for ICU Survivors: RCT. Principal Investigator: Philippe LeFevre (ICU Consultant)
- **ARISE** – Multicentre randomised controlled trial in ANZ comparing fluids or vasopressors in sepsis; in collaboration with Emergency Department. Principal investigator: Paul Buntine (ED physician)
- **SNAP** – Staphylococcus Aureus Network Adaptive Platform trial. In collaboration with Infectious Diseases. Principal Investigator: Stephen Guy (ID Physician)

INTER/NATIONAL RESEARCH REGISTRIES AND SURVEYS

SPRINT-SARI – Continuous national registry for COVID positive patients. Principal investigator: Peter Chan (ICU Consultant)

EXCEL – Continuous national registry of ECMO delivery and outcomes. Principal investigator: John Dyett (ICU Consultant)

ECMOCARD – Continuous international registry of COVID positive patients needing mechanical ventilation or ECMO for respiratory failure. Lead investigator: Cheelim Liew (Nurse Practitioner)

ELSO – Continuous Extracorporeal Life Support Organization Registry; a comprehensive international data registry of patients receiving ECMO, supporting clinicians clinical research, and regulatory agencies. John Dyett (ICU Consultant), Cheelim Liew (Nurse Practitioner)

ANZICS APD Data – Continuous detailed de-identified clinical data registry of all ICU admissions submitted weekly. Steven Hirth (ICU Data Analyst), Graeme Duke (ICU Consultant)

- **ANZICS Critical Care Resources report** –Annual audit of clinical activity and clinical resources compared to national benchmarks. Graeme Duke (ICU Consultant), Steve Hirth (ICU Data Analyst), Di Parker (ICU Consultant), Nicole Robertson (ICU Research Manager)
- **ANZICS Point Prevalence Program** – Annual snapshot observational survey of current clinical practice in intensive care focusing on specific therapies not reported elsewhere. Principal Investigator: Graeme Duke (ICU Consultant), Di Parker (ICU Consultant), Nicole Robertson (ICU Research Nurse), Kym Gellie (ICU Research Nurse)

Inspire beyond ICU – An audit of usual physiotherapy practice in mechanically ventilated patients in the ICU. Principal Investigator: Kirsty Hearn (Physiotherapist)

EASTERN HEALTH (LOCAL) RESEARCH PROJECTS

- **Clinical Decision Support for Mechanical Ventilation** - analysis based on real-time eMR data. Led by: Steven Hirth (ICU Data Analyst), John Dyett (ICU Consultant)
- **Clinical evaluation of the national hospital acquired complication program** Ongoing audits of ICU, Subacute (PJC), acute care, and Anaesthesia complications. Principal investigator: Graeme Duke (ICU Consultant)
- **A retrospective audit of Difficult Airway Complications under Anaesthesia.** Clinical audit. Lead Investigators: Courtney Cini (Box Hill Registrar), Tarin Ward (Anaesthetics Research Nurse), Steve Hirth (ICU Data Analyst), Graeme Duke (ICU Consultant).

- **DECODE** – Audit of care of the dying patient in ICU. Principal investigators: Graeme Duke (ICU Consultant), Maria DeFreitas (ICU Registrar), Lucinda Roberts (ICU Registrar)
- **Trainee Assessment and ICU Feedback Process.** Led by: Philippe LeFevre (ICU Consultant), Steve Hirth (ICU Data Analyst)
- **Audit of Clinical Documentation in ICU:** Admission note, ANZICS data, Discharge Summary. Led by: Graeme Duke (ICU Consultant), Steve Hirth (ICU Data Analyst)
- **Beyond ICU** - ICU Patient Experience Peer Support Group, including other initiates to improve patient experience. Led by: Philippe LeFevre (ICU Consultant), Rosemary Kennedy (ICU Nurse)
- **Ventilation data in COVID patients - predictive data to aid clinical decision making.** Lead Investigators: John Dyett (ICU Consultant), Steve Hirth (ICU Data Analyst)
- **VENT ON – Improving the accuracy and completeness of documentation of ventilation hours in the ICU.** Lead Investigators: Nicole Robertson (ICU Research Nurse), Kym Gellie (ICU Research Nurse)
- **Angliss Hospital Liaison Nurse Survey.** Angliss Liaison Nurse Team
- **MET Dashboard.** Led by: Steve Hirth (ICU Data Analyst)
- **Monitoring Acute Care Outcomes: AMI, pneumonia, heart failure, ICU.** Led by: Graeme Duke (ICU Consultant), Steve Hirth (ICU Data Analyst)
- **ICU Management Goals: Quality improvement in EMR workflow.** Led by: Rob Paul (ICU Consultant), Graeme Duke (ICU Consultant), Nicole Robertson (ICU Research Nurse)
- **APO – Prospective observational audit of Angliss patient outcomes during closure of the Intensive Care Unit.** Principal Investigator: Graeme Duke (ICU Consultant)

FUTURE TRIALS

- **EPIC** – Eastern metroPolitan Implementation of a medical ECMO service: the EPIC Quality Improvement Project.
- **ODIN** – An Observational prospective study Detecting limb Ischaemia using NIRS in VA ECMO: The ODIN study
- **Enhancing communication in the ICU:** Exploring the use of bedside communication whiteboards for patient and family engagement
- **HOME AKI** – Haemofiltration with OXiris: Multicentre Evaluation in Acute Kidney Injury
- **Inspire beyond ICU:** A multicentre RCT. Inspiratory muscle training to enhance recovery from mechanical ventilation
- **NEPTUNE** – Net Ultrafiltration Prescription and Targeting versus Usual Net Ultrafiltration during continuous renal replacement therapy

EMERGENCY MEDICINE RESEARCH

A/PROF PAUL BUNTINE

In 2024 we continued to expand the impact of our research program, with co-authorship of 24 publications, 4 oral presentations and 6 posters. Our active partnership within the Monash Partners Emergency Medicine Stream has resulted in multiple ongoing collaborative research activities and grant applications, including the \$2.9m MRFF-funded “Just Say No to the Just in Case Cannula” project that aims to reduce unnecessary IV cannulation within emergency departments across the country. Box Hill ED is also a lead site for recruitment to the ARISE-fluids trial, which aims to determine whether additional IV fluids or early inotropes are more effective in early sepsis.

A number of changes to our team in 2024 have created additional strength to our research program. With A/Prof Paul Buntine splitting his role as Director of Emergency Medicine Research with Acting Executive Director of the Eastern Health Institute, we welcomed Grace Buzasi as a part-time research nurse and A/Prof Patrick Owen to our team as a senior research fellow. Pat brings a smörgåsbord of research and biostatistical expertise to our team, and has already facilitated a number of collaborative opportunities both internally and externally. In addition to this, Dr Erin Woodward has commenced a role as research site lead at Maroondah Hospital ED. In August, Maroondah ED held their first ever Emergency Research Week, facilitating discussions with ED consultants, registrars, HMOs and nurses on research and during 2024 Maroondah has significantly increased recruitment for the EDNAV and ARISE FLUIDS studies, as well as developing questions for future Maroondah-based audits and studies.

ACADEMIC OUTPUT

EASTERN HEALTH RESEARCH FORUM 2024

Oral presentations:

- Bai L, Burstein F, Gao S, Sajeev J, Craig S, Egerton-Warburton D, O’Reilly G, Cameron P, Blecher G, Hackett L, Miller J, Schembri E, Owen PJ, **Buntine P**. Nudging emergency department clinicians to reduce unnecessary diagnostic test ordering: a randomised controlled trial. Eastern Health Research Forum, Melbourne, Australia. 2024.
- Sedgman R**, Pallot N, Peart A, Wrobel S, Miller J, Hackett L, Maybury K, Aldridge E, Owen PJ, Buntine B. Consumer experiences and perspectives of emergency department pre-triage waiting period: a mixed-methods study. Eastern Health Research Forum, Melbourne, Australia. 2024.

- Szmerling J**, Maleki S, Mar G, Gu G, Schembri E, Buntine P & Owen PJ. The effectiveness of a multi-site, multidisciplinary analgesic stewardship program: a 12-month retrospective cohort study. Eastern Health Research Forum, Melbourne, Australia. 2024. 45616

ACEM ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING 2024

Posters:

- Bao L, Owen PJ, Hackett L, Miller J, Aldridge E, Buntine P. Adherence to the Australian Acute Low Back Pain Clinical Care Standard in Eastern Health emergency departments during the first six months of 2023. Australasian College for Emergency Medicine 39th Annual Scientific Meeting, Adelaide, Australia. 2024.
- Sedgman R, Pallot N, Peart A, Wrobel S, Miller J, Hackett L, Maybury K, Aldridge E, Owen PJ, Buntine P. Consumer experiences and perspectives of emergency department pre-triage waiting time: a mixed-methods study. Australasian College for Emergency Medicine 39th Annual Scientific Meeting, Adelaide, Australia. 2024.
- Lee J, Lown DJ, Owen PJ & Hope J. Scoping review of interventions that reduce mechanical restraint in the emergency department. Australasian College for Emergency Medicine 39th Annual Scientific Meeting, Adelaide, Australia. 2024.

Oral presentations:

Bai L, Burstein F, Gao S, Sajeev J, Craig S, Egerton-Warburton D, O’Reilly G, Cameron P, Blecher G, Hackett L, Miller J, Schembri E, Owen PJ, **Buntine P**. Nudging emergency department clinicians to reduce unnecessary diagnostic test ordering: a randomised controlled trial. Australasian College for Emergency Medicine 39th Annual Scientific Meeting, Adelaide, Australia. 2024.

OTHER CONFERENCES

Mundell NL, Buntine P, Considine J, Miller J, Hackett L, Lawson H, MacMahon I, Neason C, Neilson A, Patel D, Samanna CL & Owen PJ. Can referral to community-based exercise physiologist services reduce emergency department burden? A chart audit. Research to Practice, Sydney, Australia. 2024.

Sedgman R, Pallot N, Peart A, Wrobel S, Miller J, Hackett L, Maybury K, Aldridge E, Owen PJ & Buntine P. Consumer experiences and perspectives of emergency department pre-triage waiting time: a mixed-methods study. College of Emergency Nursing Australasia 21st International Conference for Emergency Nurses, Sydney, Australia. 2024.

Sedgman R, Pallot N, Peart A, Wrobel S, Miller J, Hackett L, Maybury K, Aldridge E, Owen PJ & Buntine P. Consumer experiences and perspectives of emergency department pre-triage waiting time: a mixed-methods study. Australian College of Nurse Practitioners National Conference, Cairns, Australia. 2024.

GRANTS

- Sedgman B, Mahy J, Maybury K, Owen PJ. CENA Innovation in Emergency Care Grant 2024. A\$2000
- Tait JL, Mundell NL, Owen PJ, Buntine P. Is exercise capable of improving cognition in adults with chronic pain? Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition, Deakin University: Seed Grant. A\$7,000.00
- Woodward E, Owen PJ, Buntine P, Lee B, Lukins J, Hackett L, Miller J, Aldridge E. A multisite, randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial to evaluate the effectiveness of adjunct sphenopalatine ganglion block for treating headache disorders. Eastern Health Foundation Grant. A\$26,068.00

MONASH SCHOLARLY INTENSIVE PLACEMENT (SIP) STUDENTS

We were joined by some excellent students on research placement last year, including Josh Jacob, who was a Scholarly Intensive Placement Research Award finalist for his work on PIVC documentation at Box Hill ED.

AWARDS AND EDUCATION

Emogene Aldridge completed and submitted [PO2] her PhD on bystander CPR: Aldridge E. PhD, Curtin University. Factors that impact on bystander cardiopulmonary resuscitation performance during the emergency ambulance call for out-of-hospital cardiac arrest.

Emergency Nurse Practitioner Rebecca Sedgman (below) won the 2024 Best Poster Presentation at the International Conference for Emergency Nurses in Sydney.

COMPLETED RESEARCH

DELIRIUM EVALUATION IN THE TIMELY DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY CARE TRIAL – PHASE 1 (DETECT-1)

The goal of this study was to increase use of the 4-AT tool in emergency care to 60% at all three Eastern EDs by September 2024. Median completion rate of the 4-AT at baseline (January 2024) was 36.1%. Following an intervention incorporating staff education, consumer engagement, and implementation of an EMR tool, median 4-AT completion rose to 61.06%.

NUDGING CLINICIANS TO REDUCE UNNECESSARY MEDICAL TEST ORDERING

A study across eight sites that looked at clinicians’ test ordering patterns in a hypothetical scenario, and whether these varied depending on how test options were presented: (1) long list of test options + free text box, (2) long list of test options + free text box + inline evidence-based advice, (3) limited list of test options + free text box, or (4) free text box only. Results suggested that clinical decision-support interventions that manipulate decision structure and employ decision assistance may reduce less commonly ordered diagnostic tests in emergency departments, especially among less experienced clinicians.

NEW RESEARCH

PENTHROX VS. NITROUS RCT

Last year saw the beginning of Eastern Health’s first ED-based randomised controlled trial:

A randomised controlled trial comparing Pentrox (methoxyflurane) with nitrous oxide for analgesia during painful emergency medicine procedures in patients aged eight years and over. (Trial ID: ACTRN12624001117505).

This is a non-inferiority study designed to compare methoxyflurane (Penthrox) with nitrous oxide for procedural sedation in Fast Track. Clinician researchers will recruit approximately 100 patients per study arm to assess the following outcomes in both treatment groups: pain, procedure satisfaction, time to procedure, time to discharge.

ONGOING RESEARCH

ACUTE BACK PAIN AUDIT

Retrospective chart audit of data from Angliss, Box Hill and Maroondah Hospital EDs to determine adherence to relevant quality indicators for the Low Back Pain Clinical Care Standard. Results from the first six months of 2023 were presented at ACEM’s 2024 ASM.

ARISE (AUSTRALASIAN RESUSCITATION IN SEPSIS EVALUATION) FLUIDS

This study compares two treatment strategies for patients with septic shock. The treatment strategies are (1) restricted fluids and early introduction of vasopressors, and (2) a strategy involving a larger initial volume of IV fluid and later vasopressor administration if required. Recruitment is ongoing at Angliss, Box Hill and Maroondah Hospital EDs.

ED CLINICIAN FEEDBACK STUDY

Currently running at Box Hill and Maroondah. The feedback study involves a simple REDCAP survey whereby junior medical staff (i.e., HMOs and interns) at Box Hill ED can provide end-of-shift feedback on senior medical staff and vice versa in a simple, anonymous fashion.

EMERGING DRUGS NETWORK OF AUSTRALIA - VICTORIA (EDNAV)

The EDNAV Clinical Registry study involves analysing blood samples from patients experiencing acute illicit drug toxicity, with the aim of better understanding novel psychoactive substances being used in the community. Clinicians at Angliss, Box Hill and Maroondah continue to collect samples for this project, which serves to identify patterns of drug use and emergence of novel psychoactive substances in Victoria.

FEBCON-ED STUDY

A stepped-wedge cluster randomised controlled clinical trial of usual care vs regular antipyretics for children presenting with a FEBrile CONvulsion to the Emergency Department. This is a multi-site study led by Monash as part of the Paediatric Research in Emergency Departments International Collaborative (PREDICT) network, and recruitment is ongoing at Box Hill Hospital ED.

IDENTIFYING BARRIERS AND ENABLERS TO COMMUNITY-BASED CLINICAL EXERCISE, A CO-DESIGN APPROACH TO IMPROVING MANAGEMENT OF MUSCULOSKELETAL PAIN IN HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

The overall aim of this project is to develop recommendations to improve access to community clinical exercise services and reduce the burden of musculoskeletal conditions in the emergency department.

PIVC STUDY

This is a stepped-wedge cluster controlled trial and health economic analysis led by Monash, with recruitment at Box Hill Hospital ED. We’ve spent a good portion of the year on increasing PIVC documentation; Box Hill’s rates are high, and in December 2024 we began an intervention designed to reduce the insertion of unnecessary cannulas (details and photos below).

PIVC INTERVENTION LAUNCH

As part of our involvement in a multi-site PIVC-reduction study led by Monash, we ran an intervention designed to reduce unnecessary cannulation in December 2024. This involved staff barbecues, a cake decorating competition, t-shirts, a pizza night, a *Twelve Days of Cannulation* carol, and an almost-life-size cutout of A/Prof Paul Buntine that made its way around the ED.



ENDOCRINOLOGY

PROF CHRIS GILFILLAN

POSTERS

- Ye S, Gilfillan C, Sim IW. A case of multiple atypical femoral and non-femoral fractures after 10 years of oral bisphosphonates. ESA-SRB ASM, 10-13 Nov 2024.
- Cunningham H, Ye S, Zhang M, Wong K, Chhabra M, Gilfillan C. Coded hypoglycaemic events at Eastern Health. ADC, 21-23 Aug 2024.
- Ye, S, Wu, L, Sim, I, Gilfillan, C. A case of multiple atypical femoral and non-femoral fractures after 10 years of oral bisphosphonates. Endocrine Society of Australia Annual Scientific Meeting 2024.

BOOK CHAPTER

Grossmann M Leydig Cell Function in Obesity and Diabetes. In Papadopoulos V, Huhtaniemi I, Lamb D, Zirkin B (eds) Leydig Cells: Formation, Regulation and Function in Health and Disease. Springer Nature 2025 in press

EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATIONS

- Grossmann M. How To Treat: Management of low testosterone in men. Australian Doctor 2024, 9:15-22
- Grossmann M. How To Treat: Evaluation of low testosterone in men. Australian Doctor 2024, 8:21-27
- Mitchell Munnings, Shaun Koh, Christopher Gilfillan. Adrenal incidentaloma: Prevalence and evaluation. Experiences from a single health network.

GASTROENTEROLOGY

A/PROF ROHIT SAWHNEY

The Department of Gastroenterology is delighted to share the highlights of its journey in 2024. With a spirit of collaboration and dedication, the department has made meaningful advances in clinical and translational research under the steadfast leadership of A/Prof Rohit Sawhney with the support of the senior research team including A/Prof Abhinav Vasudevan, A/Prof Alex Hodge, Dr Stephen Bloom and A/Prof Ashish Srinivasan.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- Dr. Rohit Sawhney, Dr. Ashish Srinivasan, and Dr. Abhinav Vasudevan received well-deserved appointments as Adjunct Clinical Associate Professors, recognizing their invaluable contributions to education and research.
- Dr. Anuj Bohra earned his PhD with an impactful thesis titled, “Enhancing the Quality and Utility of Disease Assessment Modalities in Inflammatory Bowel Disease.”
- Mr. Ian Wang completed outstanding research on micronutrients in cirrhosis, earning his BMedSc (Hons) and showcasing exceptional promise.
- A/Prof Ashish Srinivasan (pictured below) brought distinction to the department by winning an award at the Australian Gastroenterology Week, granting him the opportunity to attend the World Gastroenterology Organisation meeting in Marrakesh.
- Dr Daniel Clayton-Chubb, former registrar and now junior consultant with the department was awarded the highly prestigious Fulbright Scholarship and will visit the USA next year to investigate the links between lifestyle, genetics, and early-onset colorectal cancer.

ADVANCING FELLOWSHIPS

The department’s IBD Clinical/Research Fellowship continues to nurture future leaders in gastroenterology by integrating hands-on clinical practice with innovative research. Similarly, the Hepatology Fellowship remains a vital platform for advancing expertise and care in hepatocellular carcinoma, fatty liver disease, and cirrhosis management.

RESEARCH EFFORTS

In 2024, collaborative research remained at the heart of the department’s mission. Key achievements included:

- Groundbreaking studies on inflammatory bowel disease through partnerships such as the ANZIBD consortium (AURORA, PROACTIVE, ANZASUC).
- Significant investigations into hepatocellular carcinoma (pro-FAITH), autoimmune liver diseases (PROSPER), viral hepatitis and the complexities of cirrhosis.

The department also actively contributed to pharmaceutical trials exploring promising treatments for conditions such as coeliac disease, eosinophilic oesophagitis, alcohol-related hepatitis and metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease, fostering hope for improved patient outcomes.

ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

This year, the department’s researchers delivered numerous impactful publications on therapies for IBD, cutting-edge imaging techniques, and optimized liver disease treatments. These contributions were enthusiastically shared at prominent conferences, underscoring the department’s commitment to advancing medical knowledge and improving patient care.



GENERAL MEDICINE

A/PROF GARY YIP

The Department of General Medicine maintains a strong commitment to clinical research, with particular focus on new models of care and new care pathways. In the past year, the themes of our research have included innovative healthcare models beyond hospital walls, initiatives to improve patient access and flow, and the utility of clinical frailty scales for predicting clinical outcomes in various contexts.

Two separate chapters of research effort were recognised at the 2024 IMSANZ (Internal Medicine Society of Australia and New Zealand) conference held in Melbourne. The Best Poster Prize for the entire conference was awarded to Dr Joseph Rushton, a physician trainee at EH, who worked diligently on a research project “Comparison of Unattended, Attended and Clinic Blood Pressure Measurements in a Real Life Setting” in the General Medicine outpatient clinic setting, which demonstrated the significant difference in blood pressure readings in patients who were left alone in the clinic room, as opposed to having a clinician present in the clinic room.

The Ramesh Nagappan Memorial Award runner-up was Dr Adam Pollock, an advanced General Medicine physician trainee at EH, who presented his research “Talk To You Tomorrow – an Assessment of an Early, Proactive, Multidisciplinary Post-discharge Follow-up Program”. This research demonstrated how an innovative service achieved a significant reduction in the rate of readmissions, through the effects of an extra layer of counselling and advice provided to patients about how they can best maintain their health status after returning home from hospital.

2024 Internal Medicine Society of Australia and New Zealand conference held in Melbourne, where much of our research was presented to the broader physician community. Within this photo, you can see two advanced trainees in our department holding and displaying awards/prizes for leading research.



Our research project “Impact of a General Medicine Consultant-led Ward Rounds in the Emergency Department” was published in the Internal Medicine Journal this year. This initiative reduced the overall length of stay for General Medicine patients and improved satisfaction among junior medical staff. This model is now standard of care for all three acute hospital sites at EH, epitomising the department’s ability to translate research into clinical practice.

Current projects that are in progress include an analysis of the factors contributing to the increased occurrence of Medical Emergency Team (MET) calls in EH Emergency Departments during and post the pandemic. The findings will inform system strategies to identify and intervene earlier in patients at high risk of clinical deterioration, hence improving decision making and the patient experience.

Another project is investigating if the Clinical Frailty Scale (CFS), as determined on admission to hospital, is correlated to outcomes including in-hospital mortality following MET calls. We hope that the findings of this research would help doctors determine goals of care and treatment plans for people admitted to hospital.

In the domain of Education in the Department of General Medicine, there has been considerable evolution of the program in line with the changing landscape of healthcare and the contemporary skills required. There are several regular forums provided to our sizeable cohort of doctors of various levels of training. Of note, we have curated an enriching weekly education program for our registrars and HMOs. Topics include lumbar puncture simulation, decision-making capacity assessments (jointly delivered with the neuropsychology department), perioperative medicine (jointly delivered with the anaesthetics department), leadership in clinical codes (delivered by the ICU simulation team) and the Ramesh Nagappan Acute Care Medicine course (jointly delivered with Monash University).

HAEMATOLOGY

A/PROF STEPHEN TING

CLINIC LEADS

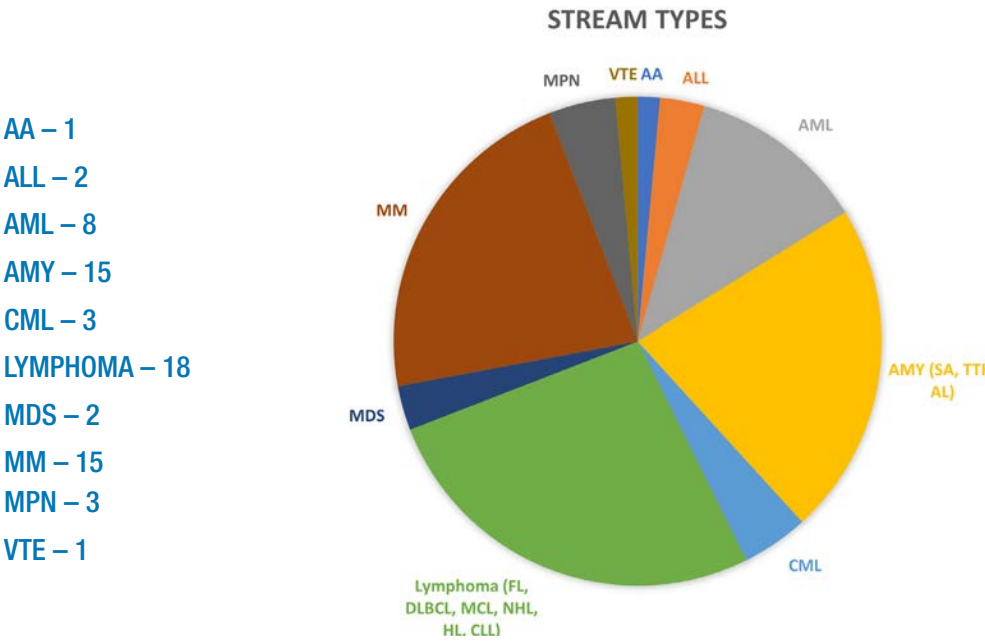
- Aplastic Anemia (AA) Registry: A/Prof Stephen Ting
- Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL): Prof Tony Schwarer
- Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML) Registry: Dr Tse-Chieh Teh; A/Prof Stephen Ting
- Amyloidosis (AMY) Registry, State Referral Centre: Dr Brendan Wisniewski
- Chronic Myeloid Leukemia (CML) Own Database: Prof Tony Schwarer
- Lymphoma Registry: Dr Tamara Marconi
- Myelodysplasia (MDS): Dr Tse-Chieh Teh; A/Prof Stephen Ting
- Multiple myeloma (MM) Registry: Dr Olga Motorna
- Myeloproliferative Neoplasms (MPN): Dr Melissa Chen
- Venous ThromboEmbolism (VTE): Dr Alison Slocombe
- (Acting) Haemostasis and Thrombosis (HATH): Dr Marija Nedeljkovic
- Anticoagulation Stewardship (ACS): Dr Alison Slocombe, Dr Noral Lee, Dr John Hounsell
- Clinical Nurse Consultant: Cell therapies: Katrina Wragg
- AML, ALL, MM: Emily Minopoulos
- Registries (EHF funded): Kirsty Whittle
- Clinical Trials Lead Manager: Liz Arnold

SUMMARY

The Clinical Haematology service continued to aim for excellence in patient care with clinical trial options at every phase of patient presentation as its foundation. Our service has respective clinical leads who govern their respective disease subgroups and associated clinical trials.

Our 16 clinical trial study coordinators and research assistants are led by RN Liz Arnold. As outlined in our pie-chart, as of the end of 2024, we had 68 registered trials including participation in 5 disease specific national registries, denoted above as REG. Of these 68 trials, 35 were active recruiting, 25 active non-recruiting i.e. ongoing active patient follow-up and 8 in start-up phase. These trials are a combination of pharmaceutical sponsored and investigator initiated. The latter included the completion of the first ever Australian clinical trial in aplastic anaemia funded through a MRFF grant and presented as an oral abstract at the 2024 American Society of Hematology conference.

Although all but one of the 2024 trials was in the non-malignant disease, the sole HATH trial in VTE was with a novel factor XI inhibitor where this class of drugs may herald the HATH “holy grail” of treating blood clots with little to no bleeding risk. If we thought direct oral anticoagulants (DOACs) were revolutionary, watch this factor XI inhibition space.



HIGHLIGHTED VIGNETTES

ACS: The formation of the Eastern Health AntiCoagulation Stewardship was a significant milestone initiated, driven and co-funded in collaboration with the hospital pharmacy department. Pharmacist, Kathy Chang together with our appointed haematologists are expertly implementing this service aimed to pre-empt HATH complications, inclusive of ongoing review of relevant HETH guidelines.

CNC: The expansion of our clinic nurse consultants from initially one part time to three covering transplantation, cell therapies, leukemia, myeloma, amyloidosis and clinical registries has been crucial for overall haematology patient care as they provide the medical glue to our patient's journeys and academic pursuits.

Amyloidosis Fellow: Through philanthropic Eastern Health Foundation funds, we were able to advertise for an inaugural 2024 Amyloidosis Fellowship. The successful applicant was junior renal consultant, Dr Lisa Paxton as AL amyloidosis is a systemic disease where kidneys are often affected. Dr Paxton quickly established herself as a valuable, clinically astute member of our Myeloma and Amyloidosis outpatient team. Dr Paxton is currently writing a manuscript reviewing the outcomes of our EH AL amyloidosis patient cohort as she embarks on PhD studies outside of EH.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2024 BLOOD, BRISBANE, QLD

- Oral: Emily Minopoulos. Nurse-led change: The development of a venetoclax outpatient pathway.
- Poster: Luke Wang et al. The definition and use of bulk disease in phase 3 lymphoma trials: a comprehensive literature review.
- Poster: Marconi T, Lee D, Strickland D, Inam, S. A global phase 2 trial of Nanatinostat in combination with Valganciclovir in patients with EBV positive (EBV +) relapsed/refractory peripheral T-cell lymphoma (PTCL)-NAVAL-1.
- Poster: De Silva R, Malecki S, Foo J, Marconi T, et al. Successful bridging with R- CHOP in a case of relapsed/refractory mantle cell lymphoma: A bridge to CAR-T cell therapy.

2024 EUROPEAN HAEMATOLOGY ASSOCIATION (EHA), MADRID, SPAIN

Poster: Eliza Chung, Luke Wang et al. Definition and use of bulky disease in lymphoma care: a study from the Australasian Lymphoma and Related Diseases Registry (LARDR)

2024 AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HEMATOLOGY (ASH), SAN DIEGO, CA, USA

- Oral: McQuilten Z*, Ting SB* et al. Efficacy and Safety of Avatrombopag in Combination with Immunosuppressive Therapy in Treatment-Naïve Severe Aplastic Anemia: Results of the Diaamond-Ava-First Trial.
- Poster: Fox L, Hunter S, Ting SB et al. Cellular and Cell-Free Genomic Characterization of Patients Receiving Avatrombopag and Immunosuppressive Therapy for Treatment-Naïve Severe Aplastic Anemia.
- Poster: Ting SB et al. Lipidomic Analysis of Flt3-ITD AML Cells Treated with Intensive Chemotherapy and Independent of Concomitant Sorafenib Display a Profile of Increased Susceptibility to Ferroptosis.
- Poster: Lewis KL, Giri P, Marconi T, et al. (2024). Interim Safety Analysis of ALLG-Pacific (NHL35): An Open Label Phase II Study of Pembrolizumab and Chemo-Immunotherapy As First-Line Therapy for Primary Mediastinal B-Cell Lymphoma.

2024 AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CLINICAL ONCOLOGY (ASCO), CHICAGO, USA

Poster: Chong G, Douglas G et al. First -line treatment of follicular lymphoma (FL) with atezolizumab and Obinutuzumab (A+O) +/- radiotherapy: Results from the FLUORO study.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

A/PROF STEPHEN GUY

The Infectious Diseases Unit's education and research activity has taken further steps forward in 2024. The unit actively participates in teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, enabling student exposure beyond ID to include Infection Prevention, Antimicrobial Stewardship and Microbiology learning. In 2024 the ID unit hosted our first SIP student (5th year Medical Student at Monash University) and has further SIP projects offered for 2025. The unit strives to provide excellent clinical care for patients with infections, and is increasingly embedding teaching and research activity into this care.

Infectious Diseases Research is largely clinical based and investigator initiated, and isn't possible without our internal collaborations – especially microbiology. In 2024 our most notable research has been participation in the SNAP study – a trial seeking to define the optimal treatments for Staphylococcus aureus bacteremia. The study is recruiting very well and remains ongoing, with new domains anticipated in 2025 (this is an adaptive platform design study), as well as announcement of some results from a domain suspended in mid-2024.

Other studies underway include:

- COVICH – a study seeking to define the natural history and genetic changes in SARS-CoV-2 virus for people with immune compromise and persistent infections (beyond 20 days positive), and whether antiviral treatment influences viral outcomes.
- HIVQCR – a registry for people we care for with HIV to ensure our care is comprehensive and consistent with national guidance.
- And eagerly anticipated to launch in 2025 is ROADMAP-PJI – a collaborative effort led by microbiology but including ID and Orthopaedics, which seeks to define optimal approaches to care for people with infected prosthetic joints.

In addition, multiple local research projects are underway or have been completed and presented, including QA research focusing on TB diagnostics, pneumococcal disease, VZV neurological infections, AMP-C producing gram negative infections, Staphylococcus lugdenensis bacteremias and others!

Parallel with the increase in research has been an increasing focus on education and training, with formalisation of the unit's teaching and education sessions and opportunities. The unit continues to host student placements, several unit staff are involved in undergraduate teaching, and all senior staff participate in advanced training supervision roles; some also have BPT supervision roles. We have commenced providing RACP activities such as advanced trainee project reviews and other college based educational activity.

The unit values the close ties and associations with Antimicrobial Stewardship (Pharmacy) Service, Infection prevention and Control and Microbiology, and has several initiatives underway with these colleagues in service delivery, research and education.

POSTERS & ABSTRACTS

Nottle E, Chean R, Guy S. Evaluation of inpatient investigations for Mycobacterium tuberculosis, and infection prevention management, at Eastern Health, 2022-2024. Eastern health Research Week, November 2024.



The EH Infectious Diseases Team

2024 CONFERENCES

RANZCP COLLEGE CONGRESS: ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Book of Abstracts. Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry. 2024;58(1_suppl):3-183. doi:10.1177/00048674241241938.
- N Keks, J Hope, D Castle, D Copolov. Effectively using antidepressants, anxiolytics and mood stabilisers
 - Z Kristensen, Y Bandara and T Nguyen. Transgender mental health
 - Z Kristensen, Y Bandara and T Nguyen. What even is gender-affirming care?
 - Z Kristensen, Y Bandara and T Nguyen. A (brief) history of gender-affirming care
 - Z Kristensen, Y Bandara Y and T Nguyen. Engaging effectively with transgender clients
 - Z Kristensen, Y Bandara and T Nguyen. Transgender health: misconceptions, misinformation and disinformation
 - Y Bandara, A Jayasekera, E Bandara, T Sellitto, E Bian. Added insight, or alarming intrusion: what will AI mean for psychiatry?
 - E Bandara. From robot baby animals to machine learning pharmaceutical design: existing and emerging applications of ai in psychiatry
 - T Sellitto. Artificial but clinical: artificial intelligence and psychiatry
 - Y Bandara. Philosophical considerations: personhood, anthropocentrism, identity and consciousness
 - D Castle, M Cross, C Davey, P Fitzgerald, M Galbally, J Hope, M Hopwood, S Loi, C Loo, A Singh, S Sundram. Innovations in psychiatry: separating wheat from chaff – an expert panel discussion
 - R Dasgupta. Critical need for specialised case in emergency departments across australia
 - S McCallum. GPS in the CCT: an innovative new pilot program to address the disparity in physical morbidity and mortality for people living with mental illness at a large Melbourne health service
 - N Borojevic, E Nikrad, D Devasagayam. How do crisis clinicians diagnose and identify borderline personality disorder (BPD) and do negative or stigmatised attitudes play a role in diagnosis and identification of BPD in emergency departments? A systematic literature review

RANZCP COLLEGE CONGRESS: POSTER PRESENTATIONS

- C McKay, B Truong, S Innes, J Hope. Just culture in healthcare settings: a scoping review of implementation practices and outcomes
- N Sharma, J Crispin, J Couper, J Hope. Can QTC interval be measured more easily in acute inpatient units?

SPECTRUM ANNUAL RESEARCH FORUM (NOV 2024)

Risk factors for suicide in people with Borderline Personality Disorder compared to those with Major Depressive Disorder. Dr Helen Mildred (EMRLD) & Dr Jen Wheeler Deakin University

10TH INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK CONFERENCE 21-22 NOVEMBER 2024

- Jacinta Chavulak “Emergency Department and Crisis Community Mental Health Clinicians perspectives Regarding innovations Required To Reduce Restrictive Interventions: An Australian Cooperative Inquiry”
- Wayne Conron “The Benefits of Introducing Single Session Family Therapy to Adult Acute Psychiatric Teams”
- Sin-Ying Tan “Is Brief Admission Effective for People with Borderline Personality Disorder? A Mixed Method Systematic Review”
- Dr Euan Donley “Audit of service-users sent to an Emergency Department by Mental Health Telephone Triage”

NATIONAL OT MENTAL HEALTH FORUM 28-29 NOVEMBER 2024 MELBOURNE

- Integrating Family and Parenting Occupations into everyday practice. Bronwyn Sanders and Becca Allchin
- A scoping review: The role of Occupational Therapists in acute mental health inpatient settings. Adele Adelle, Kris Bedford, Co-authors: Carolyn Dunn, Rachael Starbuck
- A scoping review: Alleviating behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD), the role of sensory gardens in improving outcomes for people in older adult mental health inpatient units. Robin Forbes, Pauline Dows-Bennett, Co-authors Sylvia Chau, Rachael Starbuck
- Utilising Codesign Processes to Measure Meaningful Engagement in Peer Led Dual Diagnosis Group Programs - A Multi-Phase OT Student Project Example. Michelle Hegarty and Alex Lewis
- Making a strategic impact - Victorian Public Mental Health Occupational Therapy Leadership Network, progress three years on. Rachael Starbuck and Linsie Davies.

NEPHROLOGY

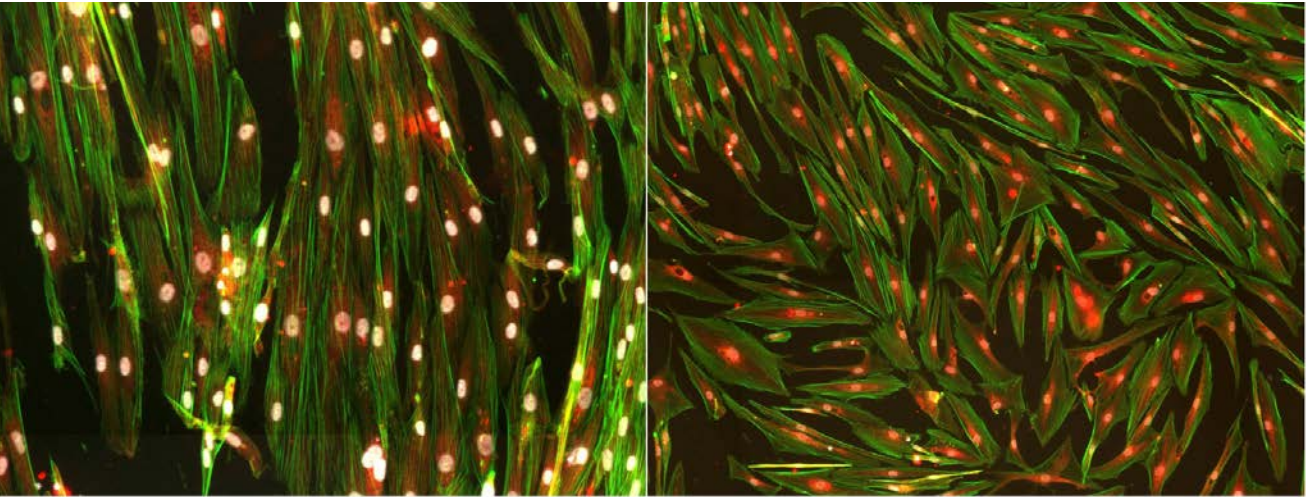
PROF LAWRENCE MCMAHON

INVESTIGATOR-INITIATED STUDIES

Dr Limy Wong has performed an investigator-led study to determine the role of fibroblast growth factor 23 in sarcopenia in people with chronic kidney disease. Taking this further now, she plans to obtain skeletal muscle biopsies from patients. With the application of single-cell RNA sequencing, she aims to characterise distinct cell types in the skeletal muscle to yield better insights into the development of sarcopenia in the uraemic milieu. In addition, with the support of Dr Jenny Ooi and Mr Simon Tsang, she has established a co-culture system of skeletal muscle and bone, which is a more representative human in-vivo like tissue model compared to existing mono-culture models. This will offer opportunity to investigate the intricate biochemical interactions between these cell types.

Dr Louis Huang’s randomised controlled trial, in collaboration with Austin Health and Monash Health, of an incremental start to peritoneal dialysis was completed and presented as an oral presentation in the Kidney Health Australia prize session at the Australia and New Zealand Society of Nephrology Annual Scientific Meeting in Adelaide, and an oral presentation at the International Society of Peritoneal Dialysis Conference in Dubai, both in September.

Dr Kathryn Ducharlet’s “Your future, your health” study that focuses on future treatment decision making identify end-of-life care preferences in patients aged 70 years and above with an estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate (eGFR) <20mL/min is also complete, and results are being analysed.



Representative fluorescence images of differentiated primary human skeletal myoblasts (left) and poorly differentiated myoblasts following treatment with uraemic toxins (right).

PHD STUDENTS

Dr Aruni Malaweera continues her PhD in supervised by Prof McMahon (main supervisor) and Dr Huang (co-supervisor) studying the effects of different peritoneal dialysis fluids on the gut, and assessing the influence of protein-bound uraemic toxins.

Dr Maddie Cosgrave has commenced her PhD with Monash University examining the prevention, treatment, and outcomes of women following hypertensive pregnancies. Dr Cosgrave was awarded a Monash University PhD scholarship. Supervision is by Prof McMahon (main supervisor) and Dr Catherine Brumby (co-supervisor)

Dr Sarah Tan is due to commence a PhD, examining benefits and possibilities of conservative care in patients with chronic kidney disease. Supervision is by Prof McMahon (main supervisor) and Dr Kathryn Ducharlet (co-supervisor)

GRANTS AND AWARDS:

- Dr Aruni Malaweera, Investigator-Initiated Research Funding Grant (Baxter) of \$50,000 for the Determining the utility of uraemic toxins in peritoneal dialysis to optimise patient care: interventional study (TREAT PD) Study.
- Dr Maddie Cosgrave, Eastern Health Foundation Grant of \$30,000 for the High Blood PreSsUre after the Pregnancy: The FORgotTEn ChiLD – The SUPORTED study.

PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL COMMITTEES:

Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology
Dr Kathryn Ducharlet – Co-Chair Kidney Supportive Care
Special Interest Group

Australasian Kidney Trials Network
A/Prof Matthew Roberts – Chair, Scientific Committee
Dr Louis Huang – Chair, Peritoneal Dialysis Work Group
Dr Limy Wong – Member, CKD Work Group

Australian and New Zealand Dialysis and Transplant Registry
A/Prof Matthew Roberts – Chair, Haemodialysis Work Group
A/Prof Darren Lee – Member, Transplant Work Group

INDUSTRY SPONSORED CLINICAL TRIALS

We are currently recruiting participants for the following industry-sponsored clinical trials:

- A Phase 3, Randomized, Double-blind, Placebo-controlled Study of Atrasentan in Patients with IgA Nephropathy at Risk of Progressive Loss of Renal Function (The ALIGN Study)
- A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, parallel-group, multicenter Phase 3 study to investigate the efficacy and safety of Finerenone, in addition to standard of care, on the progression of kidney disease in patients with Non-Diabetic Chronic Kidney Disease (FIND-CKD)
- A Phase 3, Randomized, Double-blind, Placebo-controlled Study of BION-1301 in Adults with IgA Nephropathy (The BEYOND Study)
- MFIT: a national exercise-based study assessing the benefits of exercise in dialysis patients (investigator-initiated). 400 dialysis patients are expected to be recruited, with local personal trainers and recruiting personnel.
- EASi-KIDNEY Study: A global appraisal of aldosterone synthase inhibitors in chronic kidney disease. With a planned 11,000 participants worldwide, it is an event-driven study which will last an estimated 3 to 4 years.

COLLABORATIVE CLINICAL TRIALS

Symptom Monitoring with Feedback Trial (SWIFT), a cluster randomised trial of the effect of regularly collecting patient reported symptoms from people on haemodialysis. We have had 135 participants complete the study across our five dialysis units. Dr Kathryn Ducharlet is the Principal Investigator for our site.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

SPEAKER

Dr Limy Wong, Cross-talk between bone and muscle, Mineral & Bone Metabolism in Kidney Disease Symposium, Australia and New Zealand Society of Nephrology Annual Scientific Meeting, 4 September 2024, Adelaide

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Louis I Huang, Matthew RP Davies, Catherine A Brumby, Fiona G Brown, Peter G Kerr, Peter F Mount, Matthew A Roberts, Lawrence P McMahon. Incremental peritoneal dialysis. A randomised controlled study. International Society of Peritoneal Dialysis Conference 2024, Dubai
- Louis I Huang, Matthew RP Davies, Catherine A Brumby, Fiona G Brown, Peter G Kerr, Peter F Mount, Matthew A Roberts, Lawrence P McMahon. Incremental peritoneal dialysis. A randomised controlled study. Kidney Health Australia Clinical Science Award, Australia and New Zealand Society of Nephrology Annual Scientific Meeting, 2 September 2024, Adelaide
- Limy Wong, Rachel Kenny, Jenny Ooi, Yung Shing Tsang, Emily Schembri, Lawrence P. McMahon. FGF23 and sarcopenia in maintenance dialysis population. Australia And New Zealand Society of Nephrology Annual Scientific Meeting, 2-4 September 2024, Adelaide

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

- Gayathri Bimal, Emily Schembri, Jeffry Van, Matthew Roberts , Darren Lee. Risk factors for delayed or omitted tacrolimus in kidney transplant recipients during hospital admissions—a single centre study, Australia And New Zealand Society of Nephrology Annual Scientific Meeting, 2-4 September 2024, Adelaide
- Estelle Sultana, Qiaoran Tu, Benjamin Hunt, Matthew A. Roberts. Temporal change in ultrafiltration rate in haemodialysis patients over a three-month period. Australia And New Zealand Society of Nephrology Annual Scientific Meeting, 2-4 September 2024, Adelaide
- Jessica Davies, Maella Teele, Louis Huang, Lawrence McMahon. Characteristics of peritoneal dialysis-related peritonitis during the COVID-19 pandemic. Australia And New Zealand Society of Nephrology Annual Scientific Meeting, 2-4 September 2024, Adelaide
- Aruni Malaweera, Louis Huang, Lawrence McMahon. The association between patient-reported outcomes(proms) and traditional dialysis adequacy measuresin peritoneal dialysis (pd) patients. Australia And New Zealand Society of Nephrology Annual Scientific Meeting, 2-4 September 2024, Adelaide
- Mohammad Alamein, Darren Lee. Why are patients with IgA nephropathy not on sodium-glucose co-transporter 2 inhibitors—a single centre retrospective real-world study. Australia And New Zealand Society of Nephrology Annual Scientific Meeting, 2-4 September 2024, Adelaide
- Ileyesha Roberts, Nicole Scholes-Robertson, Chandana Guha, Talia Gutman, Martin Howell, Brydee Cashmore, Pamela Lopez-Vargas, Germaine Wong, Robert MacGinley, Anneliese Synnot, Jonathan Craig, Allison Jauré, Rathika Krishnasamy, David Tunnicliffe. CARI Guidelines framework for including people with lived experience of kidney disease in developing clinical practice guidelines. Australia And New Zealand Society of Nephrology Annual Scientific Meeting, 2-4 September 2024, Adelaide
- Limy Wong, Rachel Kenny, Jenny YY Ooi, Yung Shing Tsang, Emily Schembri, Lawrence P McMahon. FGF23 and sarcopenia in maintenance haemodialysis population. 2024 Eastern Health Research Forum, 20 November 2024, Melbourne.
- Lisa Paxton, Emily Schembri, Anthony Longano, Lawrence P McMahon, Limy Wong. Application of renal risk score in a cohort of ANCA glomerulonephritis. 2024 Eastern Health Research Forum, 20 November 2024, Melbourne.

NEUROSCIENCES

A/PROF PATRICK CARNEY

DEMENTIA

SPONSORED CLINICAL TRIALS

- Trailblazer 5 – Donanemab/placebo to remove existing amyloid in participants with early symptomatic Alzheimer’s Disease.
- Kinaxis – Investigation Product KNX100/placebo, in the treatment of participants with agitation associated with dementia.
- Selenate - Sodium Selenate/placebo as a Disease Modifying Treatment for Probable Behavioural Variant Fronto-temporal Dementia (or progressive nonfluent aphasia)
- Trailrunner 3 - A Study of Remternetug Versus Placebo in Early Alzheimer’s Disease Participants at Risk for Cognitive and Functional Decline
- Passage Bio – Novel gene therapy for patients with FTD-GRN. Investigational Product, PBFT02 delivered directly to the CSF via a single intra-cisterna magna injection.

The NfL And Voice Acoustics In Dementia Diagnosis (NAVAIDD) study is investigating the utility of neurofilament light chain (NfL) and digital biomarkers in dementia diagnosis. A simple diagnostic tool- such as a blood test to measure biomarkers, will pave the way for early detection of brain degeneration. We initially received funding from the Victorian Medical Research Acceleration Fund and then a further MRFF NHMRC Early to Mid-Career Researchers Grant to extend the study until 2027. In 2024, we were one of five projects accepted for an Eastern Health Research Foundation grant by the Inner East Community Finance group. This extra funding has expanded the project to analyse the cost-benefit of blood biomarkers. To date, we have recruited 460 of the expected 1000 participants.

In September, our team participated in Dementia Action Week by creating a display at Box Hill Hospital to raise awareness about building dementia-friendly communities. The event was supported by Dementia Australia, who provided educational materials and giveaways for visitors.



Eastern Health Foundation funding enabled the research project **Community, Country, and Cognition: Place-based healthy brain ageing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**

Dr Antonia Clarke, Consultant Neurologist (pictured below) undertook a research project to explore how Place – encompassing Country, Community, and Culture – can support culturally secure approaches to healthy brain ageing and dementia care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By examining Census-level data for my PhD, our research team demonstrated that dementia odds decrease with rurality for non-Indigenous Australians whereas this is not the case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. To better understand these trends, our team has been generously supported by the Eastern Health Foundation Research and Innovation Grant to develop partnerships with Aboriginal clinicians and communities in metropolitan, rural and remote NSW and regional Victoria. By employing Indigenous methodologies such as yarning – a storytelling-based approach to gathering information – at each of these sites, our research honours Indigenous ways of Knowing, Being, and Doing.

This process has already provided key insights into how existing strengths within Community can be harnessed to mitigate risk factors for dementia. Longer-term, this research aims to support local health services to develop practical, culturally informed, community-led dementia prevention programs.



EPILEPSY

The Eastern Health epilepsy team continues to pursue opportunities to collaborate with colleagues to develop novel epilepsy research projects, as well as partnering with key opinion leaders to conduct investigator-initiated research. Key highlights include:

Dr Alex Bryson has returned from a Fullbright Scholarship. During his stay at Columbia University, New York he spent time gaining experience in how to use optical methods that allow brain activity to be recorded, and manipulated, at very high resolution in experimental models. These methods can be used to understand the mechanisms of hyperexcitability in neurological diseases such as epilepsy, and they rely on sensors that can detect spikes and changes in voltage at cellular resolution across populations of neurons.

A/Prof Patrick Carney (CIB) in collaboration with the Allied Health Research team (CIA Prof Katherine Harding) at EH has secured an NHMRC partnership grant to extend the collaborative work they have done previously using the STAT model (Specific Timely Assessment and Triage). The research they have completed improving performance in the outpatient epilepsy service has been used as the pilot for a larger study to apply this model of clinic management more broadly across EH specialist outpatient clinics. This study has the potential to significantly improve access to outpatient care at EH.

D Alex Trusell has joined Eastern Health as a clinical epilepsy fellow this year and is leading a collaborative research project across several Victorian epilepsy centres looking identifying clinical factors that predict failure to attend the first seizure service.

We have commenced recruitment for The Personalised Selection of Medication for Newly Diagnosed Adult Epilepsy (PERSONAL) trial and the protocol for this study has just been accepted for publication. This unique study, developed by Prof Patrick Kwan will look at the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in optimising medication selection for patients with a new diagnosis of epilepsy. Recruitment has commenced at the lead site at the Alfred Hospital and will roll out at EH in coming months.

The EH epilepsy team continues to take a leading role in role in large, novel linkage study looking at outcomes for patients with a first ever seizure. A related paper (Li et al. 2024 JAMA Neurology) has already been published and a novel linkage algorithm has been developed for identification of first seizure. Statewide linkage is underway and we expect to complete the initial phase of data linkage and an initial validation study within the next few months

We continue to strongly support the Australian Epilepsy Project, a world leading study of advanced diagnostic and classification techniques in Epilepsy funded by the MRFF. A/ Prof Carney has is on the steering committee of this project and EH remains one of the major recruiting sites.

We continue to be engaged in research into new investigational agents in conjunction with the Eastern Clinical Research Unit (ECRU) and the Australian Epilepsy Clinical Trials Network (AECTN). The team has commenced two pharma sponsored studies this year on new investigational agent in patients with medication refractory epilepsy.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AND NEUROIMMUNOLOGY (MSNI)

2024 provided the MSNI Unit an abundance of active clinical and translational research under the leadership of Dr Katherine Buzzard, alongside Associate Investigators Dr Olga Skibina, Dr Mark Marriott, Dr Izanne Roos, Dr Melissa Chu and study coordinators Amanda Fiora, Carly Shaddick and Sandy San Jose.

The year saw the MSNI unit conduct multiple pharmaceutical sponsored studies in Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and other non-MS neuroimmunological disease, and the continuation and commencement of many investigator-initiated research projects.

With Dr Katherine Buzzard among one of the successful chief investigators on an MRFF grant worth \$1.7 million to investigate the use of IVIG in Australia, Eastern Health has been able to commence recruitment into this study – VALUE MG. With the availability of the MGBase registry, the national prospective health economics study is trying to optimise the use of immunoglobulin treatment in adults with MG. The main interests of this research being in assessing and justifying the clinical boundaries for cost-effective use, in improving symptom management. The commencement of this study, along with several other pharmaceutical sponsored studies complements the MSNI unit’s commitment to ongoing research into Myasthenia Gravis.

In 2024 the MSNI unit continued to conduct several non-recruiting clinical trials which included:

- FENtrepid – A Phase III, double blind, double dummy study to evaluate efficacy & safety of Fenebrutinib (BTK inhibitor) in adults with PPMS – comparator study Fenebrutinib (BTK Inhibitor) 100mg oral BD to Ocrelizumab 600mg 6 monthly infusion.
- Lemtrada OBS13434 – An observational study of participants who received Lemtrada (Alemtuzumab) in patients with relapsing forms of MS. This is a 10-year safety follow up study.
- CLOBAS - Cladribine Long-term efficacy Biomarker Australian Study. The primary objective to monitor outcomes of RRMS patients on Cladribine over 6 years.
- MSBase - An international registry dedicated to evaluating outcomes data in multiple sclerosis (MS). This registry is used in studies that aim to improve the quality of care by evaluating outcomes.
- MGBase - An international registry dedicated to evaluating outcomes data in Myasthenia Gravis (MG). This registry is used in studies that aim to improve the quality of care by evaluating outcomes.
- Autoimmune Encephalitis and other Neuroinflammatory Conditions - Both a prospective and retrospective study identifying biomarkers (immune signatures, imaging and EEG correlates) and cognitive outcomes in patients with AE and other neuroinflammatory conditions.
- Crystal Ball – Biomarkers to predict individual response to Multiple Sclerosis Therapies (Crystal Ball Project 2.0)
- PREGMOLS – The immunobiology of pregnancy, and impacts in women with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) or Neuromyelitis Optical Spectrum Disorder (NMOSD) (Pregnancy Immunobiology Study)
- MS REACTOR - Prospective clinic and home-based serial monitoring of cognition in RRMS.

Moving into 2025 the MSNI unit is looking forward to a another busy year complemented by a combination of investigator initiated and pharmaceutical sponsored research at Eastern Health.

STROKE TEAM

2024 was an exciting and highly productive year for the Stroke Trials Team. We enrolled 132 patients across 12 trials and registries, ranging from small investigator-led studies to large, multi-centre, pharmaceutical-sponsored trials.

We saw the publication of two international, practice-changing RCTs. Firstly, TASTE — started in 2015 at Box Hill — finally put the nail in the coffin for alteplase in the <4.5hr time window. BHH was the second-highest enrolling site, and together with our friends at Royal Adelaide and John Hunter, we got this done. We finished our stockpile of alteplase and transitioned to tenecteplase early in 2025 as our default thrombolytic drug. Secondly, TEMPO2 — the result of TEMPO2 cautioned us against thrombolysing non-disabling stroke (NIHSS up to 5) in patients with proven vessel occlusion or perfusion deficit. BHH was the top enrolling site, second only to Calgary, having contributed to nearly 10% of the ~800 cohort. The TASTE and TEMPO2 trial results were presented at the European Stroke Organisation Meeting in Basel and simultaneously published in *The Lancet Neurology*.

Ongoing trials include OCEANIC-STROKE, Bayer’s biggest trial program to date, testing asundexian in secondary stroke prevention. Final patient visits are being scheduled for quarter three of 2025. Box Hill is the highest enrolling site in Australia, enrolling 57 out of 394 patients nationwide. We have started Librexia in 2025 — a similar compound to asundexian but from Bristol Myers Squibb–Janssen. Again, we hope to become the leading enrolling site in Australia.

We have three ongoing acute reperfusion trials at present: EXTEND-IA DNase for ELVO with TNK in the <4.5hr window; POST-ETERNAL for basilar stroke up to 24 hrs; and ACT-GLOBAL, a platform trial — a collaboration between The George Institute for Global Health in Sydney and the University of Calgary — testing different doses of TNK in <4.5hr lysis under normal conditions, including the option of enrolling patients on a DOAC.

This is very exciting, as most — if not all — patients who present with acute stroke at Box Hill in 2025 will be eligible for enrolment in a clinical trial. There is still so much we don’t know!

For haemorrhagic stroke trials, Box Hill is actively participating in the EVACUTE trial for intracerebral haemorrhage, having randomized our first patient in November 2024. Additionally, we are preparing to initiate at least four more new trials in 2025, spanning from the acute to the subacute phases of stroke. It is essential for primary stroke centres like Box Hill Hospital to be represented in these clinical studies, as they provide critical real-world insights, ensure diverse patient participation, and contribute to shaping the future of stroke treatment guidelines.

From a clinical standpoint, Box Hill continues to have the fastest median door-to-needle time in Australia, sitting at mid-40s minutes, compared to mid-70s minutes nationally. We set the bar for rapid stroke treatment. We continue to shorten our door-in-door-out (DIDO) time, both in and out of hours. A DIDO of 60 minutes was only achieved a few years ago — but now seems so yesterday!

Our aspiration for 2025 and beyond is for Eastern Health to become the first health service in Australia to have two certified stroke units. Our acute stroke nurses have been working tirelessly across both sites since early 2024 to improve equity of stroke care across our Box Hill and Maroondah sites.

Finally, Eastern Health Foundation continues to raise funds for the Bi-Plane Angiography Suite at Box Hill Hospital. This critical infrastructure investment will enable the possibility of an on-site endovascular clot retrieval/mechanical thrombectomy service, allowing our team to provide comprehensive acute stroke care — closer to home for patients in our catchment area. It will also open up opportunities for other new clinical services and procedures to be performed at Box Hill Hospital.

Here is our hard-working team enjoying some time out together.



ONCOLOGY

PROF PHILLIP PARENTE

2024 was yet again another busy and productive research year for oncology research at the Eastern Health Clinical School and Eastern Health. Our researchers, clinicians, trainees, and students, published work in multiple peer reviewed journals and presented at a number of international and national cancer conferences (see below). We also ran several clinical trials to enable access to the latest therapies for our patients.

Research highlights included Dr Margaret Lee’s Oral presentation at the European Society of Medical Oncology Conferences in Barcelona; multiple publications in Lancet Oncology by Prof. Ian Davis; the cross institutional appointment of clinician researcher Dr Edmond Kwan, a prostate cancer specialist, across EHCS, the Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute and Eastern Health as Laboratory Head, Senior Research Fellow and Medical Oncologist; as well as receipt of grant funding to improve clinical trial access for Eastern Health’s indigenous patient population.

SELECTED CONFERENCE ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- Tie J, ,..., Wong R et al. Circulating tumor DNA analysis informing adjuvant chemotherapy in locally advanced rectal cancer: The randomized AGITG DYNAMIC-Rectal study. ASCO Conference 2024 Chicago, USA.
- Mortier L, ,..., Parente P et al. Early recurrence in a pooled international cohort of melanoma patients treated with adjuvant nivolumab in a real-world setting. EADO Congress 2024 Paris, France.
- Ayati N, ,..., Davis ID et al. Prospective multicentre standardisation of serial 177Lu-PSMA SPECT/CT images in patients with metastatic castrate resistant prostate cancer treated with 177Lu-PSMA-617. EANM Congress, 2024, Hamburg, Germany.
- Liu DS, ,..., Lee MMW et al. An Interventional Study Evaluating Pathological Response to Guide Adjuvant FLOT chemotherapy in gastroesophageal cancer. ESMO Congress 2024 Madrid, Spain.

SELECTED CONFERENCE POSTER PRESENTATION

- Kwan EM et al. Circulating tumour DNA fraction as a predictor of treatment efficacy in a randomized phase 2 trial of 177Lu-PSMA-617 (LuPSMA) versus cabazitaxel in metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC) progressing after docetaxel (TheraP ANZUP 1603), Poster Presentation, ASCO Annual Meeting, 2024. Chicago, USA. * Conquer Cancer Foundation Nizar M. Tannir Endowed Merit Award
- Kwan EM et al. Impact of androgen deprivation therapy (ADT) on circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA) detection in de novo metastatic castration-sensitive prostate cancer (mCSPC), Poster Presentation, ASCO GU, 2024. San Francisco, USA. * Conquer Cancer Foundation Merit Award
- Soo WK et al. ICOPE with cancer: a focus on primary care. Australian & New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine conference, May 2024, Christchurch, New Zealand.
- Davis ID et al. ANZUP Cancer Trials Group. Radiographic progression without PSA progression in metastatic hormone-sensitiveprostate cancer (mHSPC): a retrospective analysis from the ENZAMET trial (ANZUP 1304). ASCO GU 2024 San Francisco, USA.
- Tie J, ,..., Wong R et al. Circulating Tumor DNA Analysis Guiding Adjuvant Therapy in Stage II Colon Cancer: Overall Survival and Updated 5-Year Results from the Randomized DYNAMIC Trial. ASCO Annual Meeting 2024 Chicago, USA.
- Wong C, ,..., , Wong R,et al. Real world impact of pembrolizumab availability for deficient mismatch repair metastatic colorectal cancer. ASCO Annual Meeting 2024 Chicago, USA.

- Lee B, ,..., Wong R et al. Mutated KRAS as a promising target in pancreas cancer: PURPLE registry data to inform real-world incidence, prognostic significance and to aid trial recruitment. ASCO Annual Meeting 2024 Chicago, USA.
- McLaughlin RA, ,..., Davis ID et al. PSA at 7 months is prognostic in metastatic hormone-sensitive prostate cancer treated with enzalutamide: landmark analysis of ENZAMET (ANZUP 1304). ASCO Annual Meeting 2024 Chicago, USA *winner ASCO Merit Award.
- Horvath L, ,..., Davis ID et al. Association of the lipid biomarker, PCPro, and clinical outcomes in the ENZAMET trial (ANZUP 1304). ESMO Congress 2024, Barcelona, Spain.
- Hamid A, ,..., Davis ID et al. Clinical prognostic factors within the high volume subgroup of metastatic hormone sensitive prostate cancer (mHSPC) in ENZAMET (ANZUP 1304). ESMO Congress 2024, Barcelona, Spain.
- Williams C, ,..., Wong R et al. A multi-centre analysis of metastatic colorectal cancer diagnosed under the age of 35; a molecularly distinct group? ESMO Asia 2024 Singapore.
- Lee B, ,..., Wong R et al. The potential role of serial circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA) testing after upfront surgery to guide adjuvant chemotherapy for early stage pancreatic cancer: The AGITG DYNAMIC-Pancreas trial. ASCO Annual Meeting 2024 Chicago, USA.
- Tolmeijer SH, Kwan EM et al. Circulating tumour DNA measurements and PET0imaging to evaluate response in a phase Ib trial of metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer treated with Lutetium-177-PSMA-617 plus pembrolizumab. Poster Presentation, ESMO Congress 2024. Barcelona, Spain.
- Bentick G, ,..., Anton A et al. Clinicopathological Predictors of Favourable Response to Docetaxel in Patients with Metastatic Castration-Resistant Prostate Cancer. ESMO ASIA 2024, Singapore.
- Munzur A, ,..., Kwan EM et al. Chromatin modifications on plasma ctDNA as a tool to phenotype castration-resistant prostate cancer, Poster Presentation, ASCO GU, 2024. San Francisco, USA.
- Niazi T, ,..., Davis ID et al. ANZUP Cancer Trials Group. Baseline disease characteristics of participants enrolled on ENZARAD (ANZUP1303) and DASL-HiCaP (ANZUP1801) trials of highly effective androgen receptor antagonists in high-risk localized or locally advanced prostate cancer (PCa). ASCO GU 2024, San Francisco, USA.
- Blossom Mak B, ,..., Davis ID et al. ANZUP Cancer Trials Group. P3BEP (ANZUP 1302): An international randomized phase 3 trial of accelerated versusstandard BEP chemotherapy for individuals aged 11-45 years with intermediate and poor-risk metastaticgerm cell tumours (GCTs). ASCO GU 2024, San Francisco, USA.
- Pook DW, ,..., Davis ID et al. ANZUP Cancer Trials Group. UNICAB: Cabozantinib in locally advanced or metastatic non- clear cell renal cell carcinomapost immunotherapy or in those unsuitable for immunotherapy (ANZUP 1802). ASCO GU 2024, San Francisco, USA.
- McGuiness G, et al. Compliance with anti-cancer therapy prescribing guidelines at Eastern Health: a retrospective audit of clinical practice MOGA ASM 2024 Sydney, Australia.
- Andrews M, ,..., Mant A et al. Real world management and outcomes of melanoma patients in Australasia (The MASTER REGISTRY): a preliminary look. MOGA ASM 2024 Sydney, Australia.
- Canning L, ,..., Devitt B et al. Co-Designing Resource Appropriate Local Cancer Guidelines in the Solomon Islands: A Focus on Breast Cancer Management. COSA ASM 2024 Gold Coast Australia.
- Jaboury S, Fang Q, et al. Comparison of rates of Immune-Related adverse events in the neoadjuvant and metastatic settings in breast cancer patients. MOGA ASM 2024 Sydney, Australia.
- Lescai P, Axford L, et al. A retrospective review of the Breast Cancer Survivorship model of care. MOGA ASM 2024 Sydney, Australia.
- Inderjeeth AJ, ,..., Anton A et al. Changing landscape of real-world upfront treatment of metastatic hormone-sensitive prostate cancer (mHSPC). ANZUP 2024 Gold Coast, Australia.
- Yeung Y, ,..., Anton A et al. Real-world clinical outcomes in Non-Metastatic (M0) Castration-Resistant Prostate Cancer (CRPC) patients in Australia ANZUP 2024 Gold Coast, Australia

- Kua R, ..., Anton A et al. Real world treatment and outcomes in metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC) by relative socioeconomic status (SES) and geographical location. ANZUP 2024 Gold Coast, Australia.
- Stirling RG, ..., Parente P et al. Impacts of a Clinical Quality Registry on Lung Cancer Quality measures: A retrospective observational study of the Victorian Lung Cancer Registry. TOGA ASM 2024 Sydney, Australia.
- Botros A, Rival P, Page F, Davis ID, Sengupta S. The use of a 12-item surgical checklist in TURBT leads to a significant improvement in documentation and bladder cancer risk stratification. Urological Association of Asia Congress, 2024 Bali, Indonesia.
- Botros A, Rival P, Davis ID, Sengupta S. The use of a 12-item surgical checklist in TURBT leads to a significant improvement in documentation and bladder cancer risk stratification. A systematic review of the use of surgical checklists in transurethral resection of bladder tumour: Developing an optimised checklist. Urological Association of Asia Congress, 2024, Bali, Indonesia.
- Redfern C, ..., Davis ID et al. Prognostic and predictive immune-based biomarkers to assess the benefit of adding mitomycin to Bacillus Calmette-Guérin as intravesical therapy for high-risk, non-muscle-invasive urothelial bladder cancer. ANZUP ASM 2024 Gold Coast, Australia.
- Scheinberg T, ..., Davis ID et al. LEEP study: a randomised phase II window of opportunity, neoadjuvant trial examining the pharmacodynamics effects of CDK4/6 inhibitor LEE011 (ribociclib) prior to radical prostatectomy for high-risk, localised prostate cancer. ANZUP ASM 2024 Gold Coast, Australia.
- Ong W, ..., Davis ID et al. Registries and Clinical Trials (REACT) Network. ANZUP ASM 2024 Gold Coast, Australia.



RESPIRATORY AND SLEEP MEDICINE

PROF FRANK THIEN

In 2024 we have continued our clinical trial and investigator-initiated research, maintaining a strong and diverse research profile. This includes investigator-initiated studies of long term follow up of thunderstorm asthma, eosinophilic exacerbations of COPD, obstructive sleep apnoea, sleep in hospitals, functional lung imaging and bronchial thermoplasty in treatment of severe asthma. Our department members were principal investigators in 2 successful Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) grants in investigation of obstructive sleep apnoea, and assessment of seasonal allergic and thunderstorm asthma.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL REGISTRIES

- AUSCAR – AUStralasian registry of Severe Cutaneous Adverse Reactions records patients with a history of allergy or have experienced a severe drug reaction to study how to best manage, diagnose and prevent severe adverse drug reactions.
- AILDR – The Australasian Interstitial Lung Disease Registry a bi-national database established since 2016, incorporating prospective epidemiological and investigational data at centres across Australasia of ILD patients to better understand the nature of ILD and assist in developing future clinical research. Eastern Health in the 5th highest contributor to the registry of 18 centres nationally.
- ASAR – The Australasian Severe Asthma Registry records and follows patients with a diagnosis of severe asthma with respect to the clinical history, treatments and outcomes.
- ABenRA – This subset of ASAR follows clinical course and outcomes of patients who have been prescribed the anti-IL5 receptor monoclonal antibody, benralizumab.
- ASADR – This subset of ASAR follows clinical course and outcomes of patients who have been prescribed the anti-IL4/13 receptor monoclonal antibody, dupilumab.

CLINICAL TRIALS

We continued to be active in clinical trials recruiting in the last two years in the following respiratory disease areas:

IDIOPATHIC PULMONARY FIBROSIS

- PLN-74809-IPF-206 – Beacon. A randomized, double-blind, dose-ranging, placebo-controlled study to evaluate the efficacy and safety of PLN-74809 (bexotegast) for the treatment of Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (BEACON).
- ALOFT IM027-068 – A multicenter, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, Phase 3 study to evaluate the efficacy, safety, and tolerability of BMS-986278 in participants with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis.
- ENV-IPF-103 Whistle-PF – A Phase 2, multicenter, randomized, double-blind, controlled trial evaluating the safety and efficacy of ENV-101 (taladegib) in patients with Lung Fibrosis (WHISTLE-PF Trial).
- NAL03-202 – CORAL. A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, parallel, 4-arm dose ranging study of the safety and efficacy of Nalbuphine extended-release tablets (NAL ER) for the treatment of cough in Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF).

PROGRESSIVE PULMONARY FIBROSIS

- ALOFT IM027-1015 A multicenter, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, Phase 3 study to evaluate the efficacy, safety, and tolerability of BMS-986278 in participants with Progressive Pulmonary Fibrosis.
- RIN-PF-304 A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, multinational, Phase 3 study of the efficacy and safety of Inhaled Treprostinil in subjects with Progressive Pulmonary Fibrosis (TETON-PPF).

BRONCHIECTASIS

- ASPEN – A Phase 3, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study to assess the efficacy, safety, and tolerability of Brensocatib administered once daily for 52 weeks in subjects with Non-Cystic Fibrosis Bronchiectasis – The ASPEN Study

CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

- GB4431 – A Phase IIb, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, multicenter study to evaluate the efficacy and safety of Astegolimab in patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- CLI-06001AA1-04-Pilaster – A 52-week, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, parallel-group, study to evaluate the efficacy and safety of two doses of CHF6001 DPI add-on to maintenance triple therapy in subjects with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Chronic Bronchitis
- AER-01-002 – A Phase 2a, randomized, double-blind, parallel-group, placebo-controlled study to evaluate the efficacy, safety and tolerability of Fexlamose (AER-01) inhalation solution in the treatment of adults with moderate to severe Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

ALPHA1 ANTITRYPSIN DEFICIENCY

- INBRX101-01-202 – A Phase 2, single-arm, open-label extension study, evaluating the long-term safety and clinical efficacy of INBRX-101 in adults with Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency (AATD) Emphysema

HEREDITARY ANGIOEDEMA

- A Phase 3, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, cross-over study of oral Deucritibant soft capsule for on-demand treatment of attacks in adolescents and adults with hereditary Angioedema

ASTHMA

- GSK NIMBLE 206785 – A 52-week, randomised, double-blind, double-dummy, parallel group, multi-centre, non-inferiority study assessing exacerbation rate, additional measures of asthma control and safety in adult and adolescent severe asthmatic participants with an eosinophilic phenotype treated with GSK3511294 compared with mepolizumab or benralizumab
- FpA-AS-30094 (Flair) randomized, double-blind, multicenter, active-controlled, parallel-group study to evaluate the efficacy and safety of Fluticasone Propionate/Albuterol Sulfate fixed-dose combination on severe asthma exacerbations in patients with asthma

GRANTS

- Eastern Health Foundation (\$29,500) ‘redesigning the hospital environment to promote sleep time and recovery in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (REST-COPD)’. A/Prof Alan Young; Prof Julie Considine; A/Prof Denise O’Driscoll; Dr Rowan Ogeil; Ms Penny Casey; Ms Lisa Jarvie
- Medical Research Future Fund MRF2035716 (\$1,995,310.08). SIMPLIFI-OSA – A study to investigate the management of patients using limited-channel testing versus full polysomnography for identification of Obstructive Sleep Apnea. A/Prof Ching Li Chai-Coetzer; Dr Maree Barnes; A/Prof Bradley Edwards; A/Prof Andrew Vakulin; A/Prof Denise O’Driscoll; Prof Peter Cistulli; Prof Mark Howard; A/Prof Sutapa Mukherjee; A/Prof Billingsley Kaambwa; Prof Garun Hamilton; Prof Robert Adams; A/Prof Alan Young; Dr Anna Mohammadi; Ms Barbara Toson; Prof Danny Eckert.
- Medical Research Future Fund Chronic Respiratory Conditions Application 2031254 (\$1,999,052); creating a risk assessment biomarker tool to prevent seasonal allergic and Thunderstorm Asthma: CARISTA. Prof Jo Anne Douglass; Dr Rachel Catherine Anne Tham; Prof Adrian J Lowe; Prof Francis Thien; Prof Mark Ji-Liang Hew; Prof Philip G Bardin; Prof Fay Helena Johnston; Dr Edwin R Lampugnani; Prof Lena Amanda Sanc; Prof Janet Mary Davies Assoc Prof Megan Anne Rees; Dr Don Antonio Annunzio Vicendese

INVITED LECTURES

PROF FRANCIS THIEN

European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) Annual Congress Valencia Spain June 2024
“Thunderstorm-related respiratory symptoms: an old story with a new ending?”

A/PROF JASON FOK

- Australia and New Zealand Anaesthetic Allergy Group/ International Suspected Perioperative Allergic Reaction (ANZAAG/ISPAR): “Symposium on mast cell diseases”
- Asia Pacific Allergy, Asthma and Clinical Immunology (APAAACI) Annual Congress: “New insights on the management of urticaria and angioedema”
- Hong Kong Society of Dermatology and Venereology Annual Scientific Meeting: “Recent advancements in chronic spontaneous urticaria”.
- RACP College Lecture Series: Recorded Lecture on “Drug Allergy”

DR ASHA BONNEY

National Respiratory Leadership Summit: “Lung cancer screening; from research trials to clinical practice.”

STUDENT AWARDS

Blake Mills (Eastern Health Clinical School Summer Scholarship 2023/24) - Awarded Best Poster Presentation at Sleep Downunder 2024 (Sleep Breathing Disorders Section).

“Prevalence and Predictors of Comorbid Insomnia and Obstructive Sleep Apnoea in Chinese and Caucasian Patients”. Blake Mills, Alan Young, Denise M. O’Driscoll.

Dr Asha Bonney - Dean's Award for Excellence in Graduate Research, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry, and Health Sciences, University of Melbourne 2024.



RHEUMATOLOGY

DR CHRISTOPHER FONG

Our work on outcomes and risk factors in patients with COVID 19 and autoimmune rheumatic disease was accepted for publication in Internal Medicine Journal, with our audit of rheumatology patients who were admitted to Eastern Health with COVID 19 infections. This publication was dedicated to the many clinical frontline staff who worked on the dedicated COVID ward, especially at Box Hill Hospital (was predominantly orthopaedics / rheumatology in-patients prior to the conversion). It emphasised the importance of vaccinations to protect our vulnerable patients and to avoid high dose steroid use as predisposed to higher complication rate after COVID infection.

We published a case report on a rare but important skin disease including successful management in conjunction with the dermatologists.

We had the most viewed publication on guidelines for inflammatory arthritis for Australia.

In October, we received more than 1000 views on our recommendations and paper on the perioperative use of DMARDS in people with inflammatory arthritis undergoing elective surgery.

The Rheumatology unit has been involved in ongoing production of guidelines for inflammatory arthritis for Australia. This living guideline aims to present the best available, current scientific evidence for pharmacological management of the most common forms of Inflammatory Arthritis (IA), namely Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), Psoriatic Arthritis (PsA) and axial spondyloarthritis (axial SpA).

The treatment recommendations are developed by an expert panel of Australian rheumatologists, general practitioners and other medical specialists, allied health professionals and people with lived experience of rheumatic disease, so that the most up to date global evidence is applied to the Australian healthcare context.

This is part of the collaboration with:

- Australia and New Zealand Musculoskeletal (ANZMUSC) Clinical Trials Network
- Australian Rheumatology Association (ARA)
- Cochrane Musculoskeletal as part of the Targeted Therapies Alliance, led by NPS MedicineWise

Selected articles have been published in the Internal Medicine Journal of Australia. This has included perioperative use of biologics and steroids; rationalisation of treatment once disease activity is stable.

ONGOING AUDITS AND PROJECTS BY OUR REGISTRARS AND MEDICAL STUDENTS

- Audits to explore the use of autoimmune testing and to look at guidelines to improve its use for diagnosis and also avoid inappropriate
- Audit to review the different type of large vessel vasculitis presenting at eastern Health and the utility of CT PET scans to assist in diagnosis this common large vessel vasculitis in older people tend to present with headaches and visual loss but can present with non-specific constitutional symptoms, e.g. weight loss, muscle aches
- Audit of patients who have had atypical stress fractures. This condition occurs more often in Asians, prolonged anti resorptive use.

SPONSORED STUDIES

- We are part of a large multinational study to investigate a subcutaneous injection of a monoclonal antibody against interferon to treat lupus.
- A multicenter, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, Phase 3 study to evaluate the efficacy and safety of BIIB059 in adult participants with active systemic Lupus Erythematosus receiving background non-biologic Lupus standard of care.

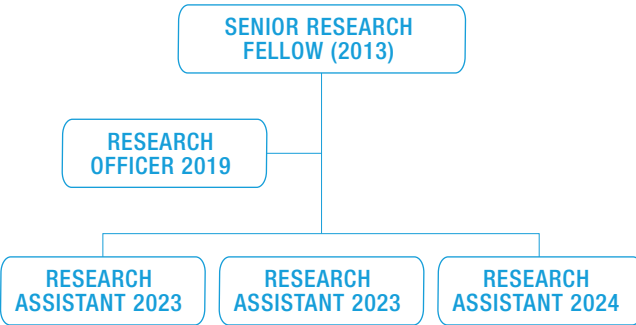
SPECTRUM (SPECTRUM PERSONALITY DISORDER AND COMPLEX TRAUMA SERVICE)

A/PROF SATHYA RAO

Spectrum was launched by the Victorian State Government in 1999 to:

- provide specialist interventions for people with complex needs.
- help people whose care could not otherwise be managed within the public mental health system.
- Support people marginalised by the mental health community due to the severity of their personality symptoms.

The research team has grown in recent years and together is making great strides in service evaluation, epidemiological studies, qualitative exploration of lived experiences, collaborative community projects, and treatment innovation.



Spectrum co-supervises research projects for Masters and Doctoral Clinical Psychology students who are enrolled at Monash and other universities. These are clinically relevant projects that translate to changes in how we support and treat clients and conduct training across the state.

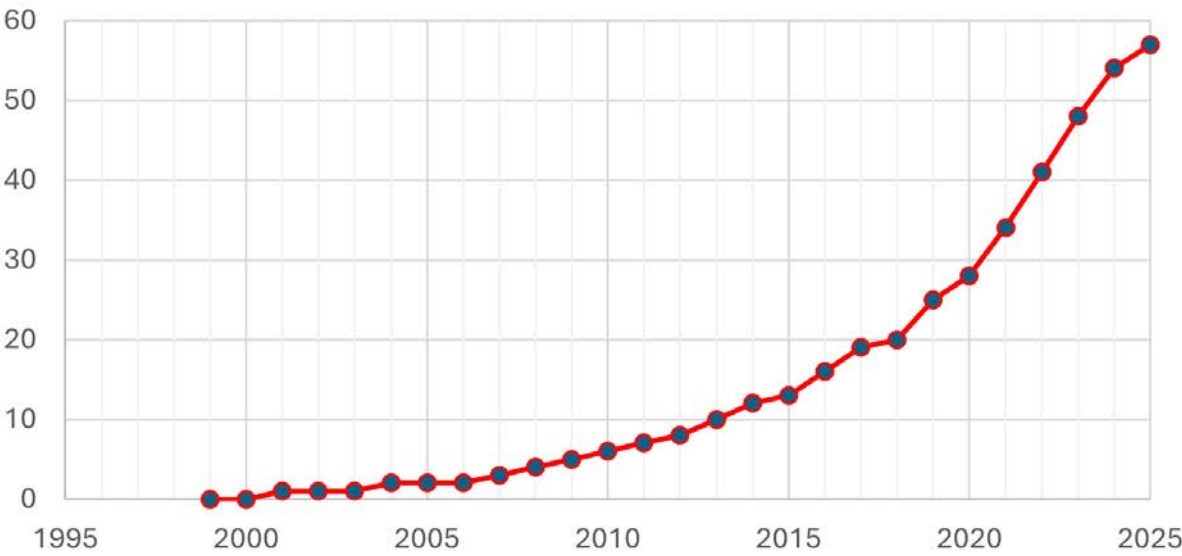
We have branched out in recent years to better understand the experiences of understudied populations. These include older adults who experience personality disorder, men diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, and people who develop borderline personality disorder later in adulthood.

We also engage in research driven by contemporary events, including six publications concerning the local and national effects of the COVID pandemic on the mental health and well-being of people with personality disorder.

Spectrum is 'home' to two senior psychiatry trainees every year, both of whom complete a research project under Spectrum's supervision. These almost always result in publication.

The breadth of research conducted by Spectrum led to a rapid increase in peer reviewed publications. Many non-research Spectrum staff are now published authors.

Cumulative journal articles published since Spectrum's inception



Recently awarded research funding includes the following current projects:

- 2024 – Pilot investigation of psychedelic assisted psychotherapy for concurrent treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder and borderline personality disorder. (Broadbear, Rao) Eastern Health Foundation (\$25,000)
- 2023 – Unpacking ‘bad dreams’: Associations between poor sleep quality and wellbeing in people with borderline personality disorder (BPD). (Bhagwandas, Broadbear, Ogeil) Eastern Health Foundation (\$20,000)
- 2022 – A Qualitative Investigation of Service Users’ Experiences of Mentalization Based Treatment (MBT) (Donald, Nesci; \$23,400)

Spectrum’s research program operates within the Spectrum Centre for Personality Disorder & Complex Trauma. Launched in 2022 alongside Spectrum’s Research Strategy, The Centre embodies:

- Spectrum’s Research and Innovation program; and
- Spectrum’s Workforce Development activities.

The Centre will define Spectrum’s research priorities to:

- increase the understanding of the disorder
- improve the lives of people living with BPD and their family/friends/carers
- identify emerging research themes
- explore suicide prevention strategies

Workforce Development and Training are essential for the translation and roll-out of training and treatment programs developed and evaluated within Spectrum’s Research and Innovation program.

Spectrum’s Training and Workforce Development delivers over 130 activities per year, training over 4,500 participants, mostly the clinical workforce. Although our focus is Victoria, Spectrum is regularly involved in interstate educational initiatives such as the National Training Strategy. Spectrum – through its lived experience workforce – also provides regular workshops to support families and carers.

Spectrum’s research is featured at several national and international forums including Spectrum’s own Annual Research Forum and our Annual Clinical Conference. Spectrum staff also present regularly at the RANZCP national conference, and the peak body ISSPD and ESSPD conferences.

SURGICAL PROGRAM

PROF SHOMIK SENGUPTA

Through 2024, the various surgical units at Eastern Health continued to contribute to a varied range of teaching and research activities. Surgical units are an integral part of the teaching delivered to medical students through the MSP, whether by means of formal lectures and tutorials or informal teaching at clinics and operating theatres. These interactions are vital to connect with and inspire the next generation of surgeons from among our medical students. Of course, the most involved teaching delivered by surgeons is to the surgical trainees placed by the Royal Australian College of Surgeons (RACS) at Eastern Health, and secondarily to service registrars and HMOs who are usually on a pathway towards surgical training.

Much of surgical research at Eastern Health is driven by enthusiastic trainees, fellows and HMOs, guided by supportive and interested VMOs. Given the very lean infrastructure that supports this research, the outputs are impressive. Countless oral, poster and video presentations have been earned at international and national meetings, particularly RACS and its specialty societies’ annual meetings. More than 30 indexed publications (listed below) resulted from surgical research at Eastern Health, and many VMOs additionally were part of research outputs from other institutions they are affiliated with. Eastern Health surgical units also contribute valuable data into national and international collaborative databases, resulting in critical insights and publications to guide better management.

Some highlights from surgical research at Eastern Health during 2024:

- The Upper-GI team continued to develop a suite of projects, powered by weekly research meetings on Tuesday mornings. Melanie Crispen, the research fellow for 2024 ably led the research efforts. Her own research included some very interesting qualitative assessment of medical students’ experience of surgical learning. The unit also appointed a research manager to help build further momentum.
- In Oct 2024, Dr Shantanu Joglekar was conferred his Master of Surgery degree by Monash University for his project “Reducing Radiation Exposure During Endoscopic Retrograde Cholangio-Pancreatography: Improvements from Implementing Standardised Protocols and Optimising Team Communication”.
- In Jul 2024, Dr Antara Karmakar was conferred her Master of Surgery degree by Monash university for her project “Validation of Novel ddPCR Bladder Cancer DNA Mutation Panels In Liquid Biopsies”.

- A further 2 PhD and 3 Master of Surgery candidates continued their surgical research through 2024, with anticipated completion shortly for some.
- The Colorectal unit continued to undertake valuable clinical research, highlighted by their publication of a locally developed prospective randomised clinical trial examining quality of life outcomes after stoma surgery.
- The Urology unit was involved in a range of clinical research, including locally developed prospective studies immediately impacting patient care (e.g. management pathway for recurring urinary tract infections, checklist for improving documentation and risk stratification of bladder cancers).
- The impact of research undertaken by previous Master of Surgery student Mo Li, on bladder irrigation after bladder tumour resection, was recognised by reference and inclusion in internationally followed guidelines from the European Association of Urology (EAU).
- Prof Shomik Sengupta gained membership of the International Bladder Cancer Group, in recognition of his expertise and track record. He also contributed to the Annual Meetings of the EAU (invited speaker), Urology Association of Asia (session chair and speaker), the World Uro-Oncology Federation (session chair and invited speaker) the Société Internationale d’Urologie (invited speaker). Prof Sengupta was invited guest editor of a special issue of the Journal Cancers on “Advances in Management of Urothelial cancer” (https://www.mdpi.com/journal/cancers/special_issues/3O382J45G4).
- Mr Dixon Woon was the Scientific Committee Chair of the 2024 Annual scientific meeting of the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand. He was awarded the prestigious award for best oncology presentation at the ASM and was co-supervisor for the project awarded the Keith Kirkland prize for best trainee presentation.
- Research on the experiences of unaccredited surgical trainees, led by A/Prof Caroline Dowling and A/Prof Jenepher Martin, garnered attention when presented at the RACS annual meeting, and was then invited to feature in a workshop for surgical educators (<https://www.surgeons.org/Fellows/for-educators-trainers/Academy-of-Surgical-Educators/academy-courses-events/educator-studio-sessions/past-educator-studio-sessions#2024>).
- A/Prof Jenepher Martin was awarded the Sir Alan Newton Surgical Education Medal by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

ANAESTHETICS

EDUCATION

ADVANCE (Anaesthesia Discussion, Views and Contemporary Evidence)

ADVANCE (Anaesthesia Discussion, Views and Contemporary Evidence) is an interactive meeting that delivers the latest evidence-based anaesthetic topics, while providing a platform for participants to audit and compare their practice to peers at different institutions.

Since its inception in 2022 and led by Dr Sarah Lee, Eastern Health Anaesthetist, ADVANCE has covered a wide variety of themes related to paediatrics, obstetrics, vascular surgery, upper gastrointestinal surgery, as well as other contemporary issues such as environmental sustainability. The meeting has become very popular, with recent attendance exceeding 200 participants from various networks across Australia.

Two weeks prior to the meeting, participants complete a pre-meeting survey auditing their personal practice. During the meeting, the collated results are presented together with a literature review by a senior anaesthetic trainee, which helps to fulfil their scholar role activity training requirement. Participants are encouraged to share their thoughts and experience throughout the meeting via interactive anonymised polling and open discussions; an aspect of the profession which can be challenging for some independent practitioners and those working in remote areas.



ADVANCE provides an opportunity to collect and analyse data that compares practice between institutions, both locally and internationally. With the multidisciplinary approach, having the presence of physicians and surgeons from relevant specialties also allows in-depth discussion regarding optimal patient management. These interactive sessions have encouraged more open and frequent communication between different specialties, which promote a positive work culture and excellent patient care.

After the session, a summary of the topic discussed, including the survey and poll results, is distributed to attendees. The aim is to further develop this meeting and engage other experts in tertiary centres, whilst encouraging attendance by colleagues working in peripheral and remote locations. In the long term, a database can be established based on data obtained from this meeting, which may provide a reflection of our current local practices.



ADVANCE hybrid meeting: Sarah Lee pictured with Orthopaedics representatives

SIMULATION-BASED ACTIVITIES

Anaesthesia Crisis Management Course

In November 2024, the Advanced Life Support module was completed as part of the Anaesthesia Crisis Management course. The course received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants. Designed with an emphasis on participant engagement, the workshops and immersive simulation was utilised to provide participants with practical education and revision in the management of perioperative cardiac arrest.

PROMPT (Practical Obstetric Multi-Professional Training)

Anaesthetics, in collaboration with the busy obstetric and midwifery service, has been facilitating the PROMPT course throughout the year at Box Hill Hospital and Angliss Hospital. The emphasis is to promote continued provision of high-quality care for our obstetric patients during medical and obstetric emergencies through multi-disciplinary education and simulations.

Paediatric and Neonatal Airway Workshop

In collaboration with the paediatrics department, the Department of Anaesthesia conducted airway workshops at Box Hill Hospital and Angliss Hospital for junior and senior medical staff in paediatrics. Through the utilization of a wide range of airway models and devices, participants gained practical experience in advanced airway management techniques applicable to both neonatal and paediatric patients.

ETALS: Eastern Health Team Training for ALS

A simulation-based training session for trainees to refresh and remain up to date with most recent developments in Advanced Life Support

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Current Randomised Control Trials

LOLIPOP - Long-term Outcomes of Lidocaine Infusions for Post-Operative Pain

A large, international, multicentre, double blind, randomised controlled trial that will recruit 4,300 women undergoing breast cancer surgery to investigate whether chronic pain can be prevented by giving a local anaesthetic, lidocaine, intravenously during and up to 24 hours after breast cancer surgery. EH Principal Investigator: Dr Raja Rengasami. EH Research Coordinator: Amy Skiller.

ROCKET Trial - Ketamine and chronic post-surgical pain in major surgery non cardiac surgery

A 5-year, 4,000 patient, multicentre, double-blind, placebo controlled, phase 3/4 randomised controlled trial of the effect of up to 72 hours of perioperative ketamine on the risk of development of chronic post-surgical pain (CPSP). EH Principal Investigator: Dr Gordon Mar. EH Research Coordinators: Amy Skiller, Lyndall Watkins, Michelle Peng.

SNAPP trial - Sugammadex, Neostigmine and Postoperative Pulmonary complications in noncardiac surgery

A large (n=3,500) 4-year, multicentre, double-blind, randomised clinical trial examining the effect of reversal of neuromuscular blockade on postoperative outcomes. The primary outcome is a composite of death or postoperative pulmonary complications up to hospital discharge (or postoperative day 7 if still in hospital). EH Principal Investigator: Dr Libia Machado Munoz. EH Research Coordinators: Lyndall Watkins, Michelle Peng.

ABSTRACTS

Morrice, C., Bedford, T., Skiller, A., El-Behesy, B., & Wu, A. (2024). The impact of common medications and bowel preparations on serum magnesium levels after major abdominal surgery. AIC Journal. [Abstract]. Eastern Health, Department of Anaesthesia and Perioperative Medicine, Melbourne, Australia; Monash University, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Melbourne, Australia.

Association of Anaesthetists, Harrogate, UK, 2024. Enhancing compliance with pain-management guidelines in an Australian hospital: a call for improvement in breast cancer surgery.

ANZCA Annual Scientific Congress, Brisbane, Aus, 2024. The impact of lignocaine infusion and ketamine on immediate post-operative pain following breast cancer surgery within a Victorian hospital - a retrospective audit.

Australian Pain Society, Darwin, Aus, 2024. The impact of regional blockade on long-term pain following breast cancer surgery within a Victorian hospital - a retrospective audit.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Deng, Y. (Jack), Chan, J., Rixon, S., Ward, T., An, V., & Yeaw, X. (2024). Evaluation and management of peri-operative anaemia in patients undergoing elective colorectal cancer surgery in Australia: A retrospective cohort study. Department of Colorectal Surgery and Department of Anaesthesia and Pain Medicine, Eastern Health, Melbourne, Australia. Presented at the RACS Scientific Congress 2024.

Chan, P., Hearn, K., Prowd, L., Sands, K., Vlek, A., Ward, T., Lau, D. (2024). Preliminary outcomes of a pre-operative multi-disciplinary surgical high-risk clinic. Department of Geriatric Medicine, Eastern Health; Department of Anaesthesia, Eastern Health; Department of Medicine, Monash University; Department of General Medicine, Eastern Health. Presented at IMSANZ Conference 2024.

Meyer D, Apputhurai P, El-Behesy B, Wu A. Validity of the American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (ACS-NSQIP) risk calculator in older Australians following hip fracture surgery. Unpublished data, 2024.

Bedford, T., Morrice, C., Skiller, A., El-Behesy, B., & Wu, A. (2024). The influence of perioperative fluid administration on serum magnesium levels following major abdominal surgery. The Australian Society of Anaesthetists National Scientific Congress 2024 (ASA NSC 2024).

Cappellari, D., Dickson, S., & Wu, A. (2024). Oral topicalization’s impact on quality of recovery in patients undergoing elective gastroscopies (GASOT study) The Australian Society of Anaesthetists National Scientific Congress 2024 (ASA NSC 2024).

Morrice, C., Bedford, T., Skiller, A., El-Behesy, B., & Wu, A. (2024). The effect of common medications and bowel preparation on serum magnesium levels after major abdominal surgery.

Eastern Health Research Forum, Nov 2024. A Retrospective Internal Audit on the Use of Modified-Release Tapentadol Following Knee and Hip Surgery at Box Hill Hospital.

Association of Anaesthetists, Harrogate, UK, Sept 2024: ‘Enhancing compliance with pain-management guidelines in an Australian hospital: a call for improvement in breast cancer surgery.

ANZCA Annual Scientific Congress, Brisbane, Aus, May 2024: The impact of intra-operative lignocaine infusion and ketamine on immediate post-operative pain following breast cancer surgery within a Victorian hospital - a retrospective audit.

Australian Pain Society, Darwin, Aus, April, 2024. The impact of regional blockade on long-term pain following breast cancer surgery within a Victorian hospital - a retrospective audit.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS

Graduate of the Chapter of Perioperative Medicine (GCHPOM) - ANZCA

Dr Tarin Ward, Dr Merilyn Rees, Dr Caitlin Low, Dr Ravi Bangia, Dr Mhousci Scanlan and Dr Joanna Simpson.



Pictured: Dr Mhousci Scalan, Dr Joanna Simpson, Dr Merilyn Rees, Dr Tarin Ward and Dr Ravi Bangia at GCHPOM Ceremony

Master of Clinical Research (Monash University)

Dr Libia Machado Munoz.

Academic Appointments

Dr Tony Ng, Dr Tom Scodellaro and Dr Mhousci Scanlan.

ACADEMIC OUTPUTS

RESEARCH FUNDING

EHCS received a total of \$39.93M in research funding in 2024. This comprised 39 grants: 15 in Category 1; 3 in Category 2, 12 in Category 3, and 9 in Category Not Specified.

Funding Category	Funding Subcategory	Funding Awarded	Award Count
Category 1	Australian Research Council (ARC)	\$488,641	1
	Commonwealth Other	\$5,182,479	3
	Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)	\$10,910,277	6
	National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)	\$5,891,450	5
Category 1		\$22,472,846	15
Category 2	Commonwealth (own purpose)	\$5,522,270	2
	State/Territory/Local (own purpose)	\$300,000	1
Category 2		\$5,822,270	3
Category 3	Australian for-profit organisations	\$1,123,364	4
	Australian not-for profit organisations	\$1,500,674	6
	International for-profit organisations	\$4,803,197	3
Category 3		\$7,427,235	12
Not specified	Not Applicable	\$3,201,202	5
	Not Specified	\$1,009,761	4
Not specified		\$4,210,963	9
Total		\$39,933.314	39

PUBLICATIONS

These figures are derived from the Monash University Power BI system and are likely to be incomplete in terms of outputs by adjuncts, and incomplete collection of conference presentations.

Summary	2024	
Output Indicator – Research	Output Count	% of Total
Research	322	85%
Not Research	56	15%
Total	378	100%

Research	2024
Output Subtype (Top 5)	Output Count
Article (journal)	276
Review Article (journal)	39
Chapter (Book)	4
Other Report	3
Total	322

Not Research	2024
Output Subtype (Top 5)	Output Count
Article (journal)	14
Comment / Debate (journal)	8
Letter (journal)	11
Meeting Abstract (journal)	7
Chapter (Book)	1
Review Article (journal)	1
Other	14
Total	56

PUBLICATIONS

AGED MEDICINE

Ward-Stockham, K., Omonaiye, O., Darzins, P., Kitt, C., Newnham, E., Taylor, N. F. & Considine, J. **Understanding the influences on hospital discharge decision-making from patient, carer and staff perspectives.** BMC Health Services Research. 24, 1, 1097. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-024-11581-0>

Omonaiye, O., Ward-Stockham, K., Darzins, P., Kitt, C., Newnham, E., Taylor, N. F. & Considine, J. **Hospital discharge processes: Insights from patients, caregivers, and staff in an Australian healthcare setting.** PLoS ONE. 19, 9 September, e0308042. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0308042>

Jespersen E, Soo WK, Minet LR, Eshoj HR, King MT, Pfeiffer P, Möller SJ. **External validation and diagnostic value of the Elderly Functional Index version 2.0 for assessing functional status and frailty in older Danish patients with gastrointestinal cancer receiving chemotherapy: A prospective, clinical study.** J Geriatr Oncol. 2024 Jan;15(1):101675. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jgo.2023.101675>

Omonaiye O, Ward-Stockham K, Darzins P, Kitt C, Newnham E, Taylor NF, Considine J. **Hospital discharge processes: Insights from patients, caregivers, and staff in an Australian healthcare setting.** Plos one. 2024 Sep 19;19(9):e0308042. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0308042>

Ward-Stockham K, Omonaiye O, Darzins P, Kitt C, Newnham E, Taylor NF, Considine J. **Understanding the influences on hospital discharge decision-making from patient, carer and staff perspectives.** BMC Health Services Research. 2024 Sep 19;24(1):1097. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-024-11581-0>

CARDIOLOGY

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Scully TG, ..., Chandrasekhar J et al. **Trends in utilization and clinical outcomes with and without the use of distal filter wire embolic protection devices.** Cardiovasc Revasc Med. 2024 Oct 28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.carrev.2024.10.008>

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Tan MC, ..., Chandrasekhar J. **Associations between dual antiplatelet therapy score and long-term mortality after percutaneous coronary intervention: analysis of more than 27,000 patients.** Melbourne Interventional Group. Can J Cardiol. 2024 Nov; 40(11):2045-2053. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cjca.2024.06.030>

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Yeoh J, ..., Freeman M et al. **Understanding long-term risk in percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) in the Australian contemporary era with a focus on defining Complex Revascularisation in High-Risk Indicated Patients (CHIP).** Cardiovasc Revasc Med. 2024 Nov 8; S1553-8389(24)00714-0. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.carrev.2024.11.001>

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DERMATOLOGY

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EMERGENCY MEDICINE RESEARCH

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ENDOCRINOLOGY

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FINANCE

A detailed financial statement is provided for 2024. In brief:

- Total revenue: \$31,924,611, an increase of \$4M over 2023 mainly from research.
- Research revenue: \$17,841,801. This has more than tripled in the last 10 years.
- Expenditure: \$32,499,680.
- Operating result: \$575,000 deficit, representing a gross margin of 17.6% and ongoing operating margin of 21.6% (calculated without including central charges as per Monash guidelines).

*Note: additional revenue earned in 2024 has not yet been paid, and will be taken up in 2025.
This deferred revenue is considerably larger than the apparent deficit listed here.*

INCOME STATEMENT 2024

	2023	2024 (actual)
Financial Plan	2,189,268	(575,069)
Operating Revenue	27,909,313	31,924,611
Commonwealth Government Grants DEEWR	5,669,323	6,503,366
Student Fees	4,653,620	4,542,778
Research	13,967,770	17,841,801
Commercial	2,273,747	2,204,128
Other Grants & Donations	741,990	(492,323)
Other Revenues	-	-
Internal Grants & Support	23,584	45,830
Inter Faculty Transfers	(1,900)	-
Intra Entity Contributions	(839,294)	(952,707)
Intra Entity Allocations	1,420,472	2,231,737
Operating Expenditure	25,720,045	32,499,680
Salary and Related Expenses	16,689,842	18,814,979
Infrastructure related expenses	446,423	483,022
Finance Incentive	-	-
Financial and administration expenses	223,079	57,600
Student scholarships and awards	294,200	369,925
Other Operating Expenses	760,722	4,197,818
Depreciation	70,806	84,507
Direct & Central Overhead Charges	5,125,509	6,186,087
Space Charges	24,721	34,397
Other Overhead Costs	2,084,744	2,271,345
Contract Recoveries	-	-
Net Cash Position	22,232,305	21,701,358
Net Cash from Plan	2,260,075	(490,562)
Capital Expenditures	155,933	40,390
Previous Year Funds	20,128,163	22,232,310

