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visit us at: monash.edu/medicine/ehcs/marc
ABOUT US

The Monash Addiction Research Centre (MARC) brings together world-leading expertise from across Monash University and the sector to provide solutions to the challenges of addiction.

We have over 100 academic members across eight faculties (28 departments) and two institutes, making us one of the largest addiction research centres in the world. The work conducted by our membership encompasses three key themes of addiction research activity:

- Science
- Culture & Policy
- Prevention & Treatment

Our focus is on building interdisciplinary collaboration and addiction research capacity to:

- Position MARC to conduct innovative research that transforms addiction science, practice and policy
- Leverage our clinical-academic partnerships, including with Peninsula Health, to test local solutions with the potential for national upscaling and impact.

OUR AIM

MARC is dedicated to finding solutions that transform the way we think about and respond to addiction.
We are pleased to present the Monash Addiction Research Centre’s Annual Report for 2018-2019

The Monash Addiction Research Centre (MARC) formally commenced operations in late April 2018. With a physical hub at the Monash Peninsula campus in Frankston, our mission is to provide national solutions to addiction by drawing on the multidisciplinary strengths and capabilities of researchers from across the University to develop and test novel scalable prevention and treatment strategies. MARC’s expertise in basic and social science, clinical and epidemiological research enables us to develop new knowledge to shape government policy and test evidence-based approaches.

MARC’s addiction research activity spans three key themes: Science, Culture & Policy, and Prevention & Treatment. Each area is represented by theme leaders who help inform MARC’s strategic direction, and promote activities and opportunities that facilitate interdisciplinary learning and development.

In our first year, we have focused on developing relationships with key academics at the Peninsula Campus, building links between addiction researchers from different faculties of Monash, forging partnerships with local government and community organisations across the Frankston Mornington Peninsula, and building a broad network of project partners.

We have made progress in strengthening these connections through the development of the MARC website, the establishment of our monthly member newsletter, and building our social media profile. In September 2018, we also co-hosted our first symposium on opioid overdose in Victoria, together with the Centre for Research Excellence into Injecting Drug Use (CREIDU).

Our research funding has seen MARC members awarded more than $16M in funding revenue, demonstrating the strength of our researchers and interdisciplinary collaboration.

We also are excited to be part of the new $32M National Centre for Healthy Ageing in partnership with Peninsula Health, which will bring together leading researchers, clinicians, industry and the community to tackle the key challenges associated with healthy ageing, including addiction.

On behalf of MARC, we would like to thank our members, research partners and the community for their contribution to the Centre’s inaugural year and we look forward to building on this success in 2019/20.

PROFESSOR DAN LUBMAN
Director

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SUZANNE NIELSEN
Deputy Director
Centre Director, Professor Dan Lubman oversees the Centre’s research and operations while playing a key role in the development of industry engagement activities. Deputy Director, Associate Professor Suzanne Nielsen is instrumental in the development of research collaborations and plays a critical role in the strategic development of key initiatives in the Frankston Mornington Peninsula region.

GOVERNANCE

Executive Management / Senior Leadership

PROFESSOR DAN LUBMAN
Director

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SUZANNE NIELSEN
Deputy Director

Strategy and Business Operations

DR TINA LAM
MARC Research Fellow

KRISTEN SMYTH
External Relations

KRISTA CRAWFORD
Executive Assistant
MARC Theme Leaders

MARC’s theme leader group takes on the collective responsibility for informing the strategic direction of the Centre and sharing information relating to MARC activities and opportunities. Theme leaders represent each of the three research themes within MARC, acting as a conduit for information between MARC and the departments and faculties in which they are based. Our 2019 Theme Leaders were:

### Science

- **PROFESSOR ANTONIO VERDEJO-GARCIA**
  Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health

- **DR JENNIFER SCHUMANN (PILGRIM)**
  Forensic Medicine

- **DR JENNI ILOMAKI**
  Centre for Medicine Use Safety

- **DR NAOMI KAKOSCHKE**
  Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health

### Prevention and Treatment

- **PROFESSOR PAUL DIETZE**
  Burnet Institute

- **DR DEBbie SCOTT**
  Turning Point

- **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR VICTORIA MANNING**
  Turning Point

- **DR SHALINI ARUNOGIRI**
  Turning Point

- **DR TINA LAM**
  Monash Addiction Research Centre

- **DR LIZ STURGISS**
  General Practice

### Culture and Policy

- **PROFESSOR PAUL DIETZE**
  Burnet Institute

- **DR DEBbie SCOTT**
  Turning Point

- **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PHILIP MENDES**
  Social Work

- **DR KATE SEAR**
  Law

- **DR SONJA KASSENBOEHMER**
  Centre for Health Economics

- **DR ROWAN OGEIL**
  Turning Point

- **DR CAMERON ROSE**
  Arts

- **DR FRASER TULL**
  BehaviourWorks
National Centre for Healthy Ageing

The federal Minister for Health, The Hon. Greg Hunt MP announced a $32M National Centre for Healthy Ageing that represents a clinical-academic partnership between Monash University and Peninsula Health. The Centre has three streams of research that will leverage an innovative data-hub to improve health in the areas of:

- Addiction (through MARC)
- Mental Health
- Rehabilitation, ageing and independent living

Although still in an establishment phase, MARC researchers have been awarded more than $16M in research funding. These examples of funding success demonstrate the strength of the emerging interdisciplinary collaboration being established through MARC. Our projects include:

Google AI For Social Good Impact Challenge Grant

**Investigators:** Professor Dan Lubman, Professor Wray Buntine & Dr Debbie Scott.

MARC Researches are the sole Australian recipients of a $1.21 million grant from Google to establish a world-first suicide monitoring system (2019-2022). Prof. Dan Lubman, Director of Turning Point and the Monash Addiction Research Centre, will lead the project with Prof. Wray Buntine (Faculty of Information Technology) and Dr Debbie Scott (Senior Research Fellow at Turning Point & MARC). There were over 2600 applicants across 119 countries, with 20 grants awarded worldwide.

The project will use AI to streamline coding of national suicide-related ambulance data. The resulting data will play a central role in informing public health prevention, policy and intervention, as well as identifying emerging trends, hidden populations and geographical hot spots for targeted responses relating to suicide.

A collaboration between Turning Point, Eastern Health Clinical School, MARC and the Faculty of Information Technology.
NHMRC Partnership Grant – ‘Developing evidence-based strategies to improve the health and safety of transport workers’

Investigators: Dr Ross Iles, Professor Alex Collie, Dr Ting Xia, Professor Shantha Rajaratnam, Professor Dan Lubman and Dr Sharon Newnam (2018-2021).

MARC members have been awarded a NHMRC Partnership Grant (2018-2021) led by Senior Research Fellow, Dr Ross Iles. The research team includes Professor Alex Collie and Dr Ting Xia (Insurance Work and Health Research Group in the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine), Professor Shantha Rajaratnam (MICCN), Dr Sharon Newnam (MUARC) and Professor Dan Lubman (MARC).

The project is a collaboration between Monash University researchers, truck drivers, employers and government working together to find out what leads to poor health in Australian truck drivers. Most importantly, the partnership will develop new ways to help truck drivers be healthy and stay healthy at work.

A collaboration between School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Turning Point, MARC, Turner Institute, MUARC and Industry.

‘Animating alcohol culture change amongst male hospitality students and workers’

Investigators: Dr Michael Savic, Dr Tina Lam, Dr Cameron Rose, Dr Ben Allitt (Chisholm), Dr Fahad Hanna (Chisholm), A/Prof Steven Roberts, Dr Brady Robards, A/Prof Suzanne Nielsen, Prof Dan Lubman (2019-2021)

Monash University will partner with Chisholm TAFE to develop and deliver a co-designed and animated multimedia campaign to address cultures of risky drinking among male hospitality students and hospitality staff that mentor them in workplace settings. The intervention will operate in all three areas outlined in the Alcohol Cultures Framework, including ‘settings’, ‘skills’ and ‘shared meanings’. In so doing, the project attempts to cultivate skills, workplace settings and norms that facilitate low risk-drinking, alternative post-work practices and care.

A collaboration between Chisholm TAFE, MARC, Turning Point and Visual Arts.

‘Preventing harm from alcohol in women attending breast screening services’

Investigators: Professor Dan Lubman, Dr Jasmin Grigg, Associate Professor Victoria Manning, Dr Darren Lockie, Professor Liam Smith, Professor Peter Bragge & Michelle Clemson (2019-2021).

Alcohol is the leading modifiable risk factor for breast cancer. This trial, funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation and the Eastern Health Foundation, examines the effectiveness of an alcohol brief intervention within routine mammogram services.

A collaboration between Turning Point, Eastern Health Clinical School, MARC, BehaviourWorks Australia and Breastscreen Victoria.
RESEARCH REPORT

Here we have chosen select examples of research completed in the 2018/2019 year.

‘Pregabalin misuse-related ambulance attendances in Victoria, 2012-2017: characteristics of patients and attendances’

**Investigators:** Dr Rose Crossin, Dr Debbie Scott, Dr Shalini Arunogiri, Associate/Professor Karen Smith, Professor Paul Dietze and Professor Dan Lubman.

The study found that the rate of pregabalin-related ambulance call-outs has increased tenfold since 2012. This increase is associated with an increase in the national prescription rate, including an increase in the off-label prescription rate. The study also revealed that co-use with other sedatives was common and called for greater care when prescribing pregabalin.

A collaboration between Turning Point, Burnet Institute, MARC and the School of Primary and Allied Health Care.

**Media:** The Conversation 'Ambulance call-outs for pregabalin have spiked – here’s why'


Extent of, and children and young people’s exposure to, gambling advertising in sport and non-sport TV

**Investigators:** Professor Kerry O’Brien and Dr Muhammad Iqbal

This is the first study in Australia, and internationally, to examine the extent of gambling advertising on sport TV and non-sport TV, and the extent to which young people in different age groups are exposed to it. A key aim of the study was to assess the effectiveness of the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice in protecting children and young people from exposure to gambling advertising.

**Report:** O’Brien, K & Iqbal, M 2019, Extent of, and children and young people’s exposure to, gambling advertising in sport and non-sport TV, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne.
‘Addiction in the Australian legal system: A sociological analysis’

Investigator: Associate Professor Kate Seear

Harms associated with alcohol and other drugs (AOD) cost Australia over $25 billion per year. The law plays a central role in managing these harms. Legal responses to AOD and the key concept of ‘addiction’ are often inconsistent. These variations have unintended and often adverse, economic, social and health implications. Using an international comparative method involving Australia and Canada, this research seeks to critically analyse legal approaches to addiction, isolating the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches. This project aimed to inform more productive legal responses to addiction, and was expected to produce recommendations for improving AOD-related outcomes in Australia.

‘Understanding the rates and characteristics of ambulance attendances for commonly used pharmaceutical opioids in Australia’

Investigators: Associate Professor Suzanne Nielsen, Dr Debbie Scott, Dr Rose Crossin and Professor Dan Lubman

Led by A/Prof Suzanne Nielsen, this team of MARC researchers including Dr Debbie Scott, Dr Rose Crossin and Prof Dan Lubman, were awarded an untied educational grant from Seqirus. This study aimed to examine (supply-adjusted) rates of presentation and presentation characteristics for commonly used opioids in Australia. The team examined commonly prescribed opioids including fentanyl, buprenorphine, oxycodone, codeine, morphine, pethidine, tramadol and tapentadol. The study also qualitatively described characteristics of tapentadol-related presentations to understand circumstances surrounding presentations.

A collaboration between Turning Point, MARC & National Ambulance Services

Media: AJP.com.au ‘Highest rates of harm were observed with codeine’


Investigating the role of social cognition in hostility and violence in methamphetamine use and psychosis

Investigators: Dr Shalini Arunogiri, Davinia Rizzo, Prof Dan Lubman, Prof Antonio Verdejo-Garcia, Prof Boris Quednow, Joshua Zimmermann and Dr David Cole

This project, supported by a Society for Mental Health Research (SMHR) Early Career Researcher Project Grant, investigated the potential of social cognition as a marker of risk for hostility and violence in adults who use methamphetamine regularly.

A collaboration with between Turning Point, MARC and the University of Zurich
KEY ACTIVITIES

Building addiction research capacity

- Establishment of grant writing workshops (resulting in multiple ARC and NHMRC grant submissions)

Building Interdisciplinary collaboration

- Engagement with researchers across Peninsula campus, within the faculty, and across faculties
- Establishment of an Interdisciplinary Leadership Network, comprised of 15 senior and early to mid-career academics, representing three research themes
Workforce Development

- Contributing content to Monash’s Master of Addictive Behaviours course
- Developing core materials for undergraduate addiction education
- Co-convening a forum on workforce development for alcohol and other drug nurse practitioners

On April 4 2019, the AOD Nurse Practitioner Forum was held in Melbourne with 60 participants in attendance. MARC partnered with Peninsula Health, Frankston/Mornington Peninsula Primary Care Partnership, Area 4 Pharmacotherapy Network and Primary Health Networks to run the forum.

The event focused on discussing current nurse practitioner models and challenges, research updates and policy updates in the nurse practitioner prescribing space. It was an excellent opportunity for MARC to network and share information with practitioners working within the addiction field.

Photo: AOD Nurse Practitioner forum organisers (L-R): Dellie McKenzie (Peninsula Health), Kirsty Morgan (Responding to Alcohol and Drug issues in the Frankston Mornington Peninsula [RAD-FMP] coordinator), Jana Dostal (Area 4 Pharmacotherapy Network), Suzanne Nielsen (MARC) & Tina Lam (MARC)
WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Facilitating Connections

- Development of the MARC website which lists more than 100 MARC members
- Establishment of a monthly newsletter showcasing events, members, research and collaborative opportunities
- Building MARC's social media profile through Twitter @MonashAddiction

Community Engagement

- Engagement with Peninsula Health and key local groups within the Frankston Mornington Peninsula (FMP) region
- Development of local stakeholder relationships, including membership of ‘Responding to Alcohol and Drug issues in the Frankston Mornington Peninsula’ (RAD-FMP) advisory board, partnership with the Association of Participating Service Users (APSU) and Chisholm TAFE
- CREIDU & MARC Symposium 2018 - Preventing and responding to overdose in Victoria: Developments and opportunities.

The Monash Addiction Research Centre (MARC) and the Centre for Research Excellence into Injecting Drug Use (CREIDU) co-hosted a symposium on September 12, 2018. There was a full house at the first official MARC event, a symposium focusing on opioid overdose in Victoria. The event had an interactive format and exciting mix of speakers, and brought together researchers, affected communities, policy makers and practitioners to present on local Victorian developments in opioid overdose prevention and response.

MARC Director, Professor Dan Lubman delivered the opening address, with MARC Deputy Director, A/Professor Suzanne Nielsen presenting on overdose prevention in mainstream healthcare settings.

Other presentations considered overdose prevention from many angles, including discussions of peer-led prevention by Sione Crawford from Harm Reduction Victoria, and the new Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR) by Sarah Hiley from the North Richmond MSIR.

The event highlighted success in innovating new ways to reduce harm, and the importance of partnerships with community in addressing lives lost to overdose.

Establishing local partnerships

In our first year MARC began building local networks partnering with:

- Alfred Health
- Association of Participating Service Users (APSU)
- Burnet Institute
- Chisholm TAFE
- Eastern Health
- Monash Health
- Penington Institute
- Peninsula Health
- Responding to alcohol and other drugs in the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula (RAD-FMP)
- Turning Point

Photo: CREIDU & MARC Symposium 2018 speakers (L- R): Sarah Hiley (Melbourne Medically Supervised Injecting Clinic), Sione Crawford (Harm Reduction Victoria), Debbie Scott (Turning Point & MARC), Renea Forniatti (National Drug Research Institute), Paul Dietze (Burnet Institute & MARC), Stephen McNally (Penington Institute), Suzanne Nielsen (MARC). Photos courtesy of Burnet Institute.
MEDIA

MARC is changing the conversation around addiction through its thought leadership, expert public commentary and engagement with the media.

Media

In our first year we established a media profile across numerous media platforms including print, television and online. Select examples include;

The Conversation – 26 November 2018
Ambulance call-outs for pregabalin have spiked – here’s why

Monash Lens – 12 February 2019
America’s opioid epidemic is starting to hit Australia’s shores

ABC’s 7.30 Report - 11 March 2019
The growing use of opioid medication has come at a cost, with opioid-related deaths doubling in the past 10 years. Frankston in Victoria had the highest number of ambulance callouts for prescribed opioid overdose in the state. Watch here.

ABC News – 11 March 2019
Study finds ‘no increase in opioid use’ since codeine was made prescription-only

The Age – 26 March 2019
The sleeping pill dependents that don’t even know they are hooked

The Conversation – 11 April 2019
Prescription monitoring is here, but we need to tread carefully to avoid unintended harms

Monash Lens – 19 May 2019
Beyond the Emergency: Paramedics not equipped to deal with men’s mental health crises

ABC News – 26 May 2019
New prescription monitoring system reveals thousands of Victorians are at risks of harm

Photo: Filming of the ABC’s 7.30 Report 2019


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FURTHER INFORMATION

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