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## REHABILITATION, AGEING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING (RAIL) RESEARCH CENTRE

### Member eBulletin #37 - April 2023

Members of RAIL are Monash education and research staff or students across a variety of disciplines within Monash Australia and Malaysia that are interested in rehabilitation, ageing and independent living.

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## A message from the Director

Welcome to another edition of the RAIL Research Centre e-bulletin. It is very pleasing to share in this edition that the first of the PhD students enrolled at Monash with primary supervision through RAIL staff has submitted her PhD, which is now under review. Congratulations to Yulisna Mutia Sari, from Indonesia, whose thesis was titled “Physiotherapy practice and exercise program delivery and outcomes for community living older people with dementia in developing countries including Indonesia.” Yulisna completed her series of studies remotely from Australia with Indonesian participants with dementia, with positive outcomes – see below for further details of Yulisna’s studies.

RAIL’s 2023 seed grant round (two grants available for up to \$15,000 each) are available. Applications are due by Friday 21 April – see further details below. We have had several important impacts associated with previously completed RAIL seed grants, including a recent MRFF grant success by Dr Susie Cartledge, whose seed grant provided important pilot data that contributed to the MRFF success (see details below).

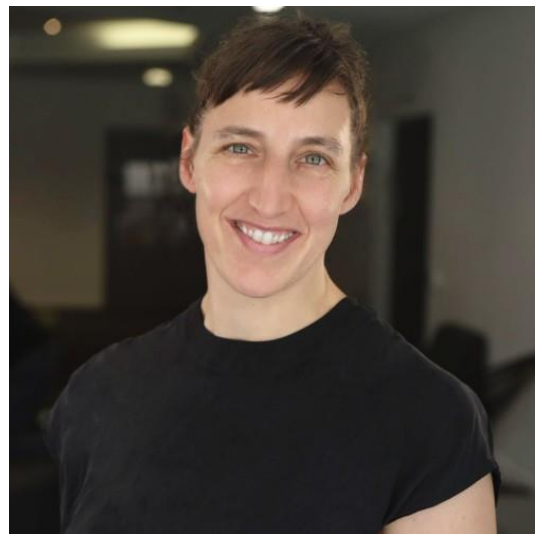
I hope you enjoy reading about our activities and outcomes in the e-bulletin, and we welcome any contributions you consider will be of interest to others. Finally, if you have colleagues, or people new to Monash who would like to become a Member of RAIL, and thereby be on our email communications and e-bulletin distribution list, please complete the Member survey [online](#).

Stay safe and well.

Professor Keith Hill

## Member profile

Professor Suzanne (Suzi) Nielsen is the Deputy Director at the [Monash Addiction Research Centre](#) (MARC). She has been a registered pharmacist for more than 20 years with much of her research focusing on quality use of medicines, reducing medicine related harm, and improving the delivery of pharmacotherapy treatments.



Her current research interests include the use of opioid analgesics for chronic pain, opioid dependence treatment and overdose prevention, understanding the impact of recently implemented opioid policies, and addressing barriers to healthcare including stigma. The overall goal of her research program is to reduce harm related to opioids and other drugs.

She is an active member of several professional associations, including the Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and Other Drugs (APSAD) and the International Society for the Study of Drug Policy (ISSDP).

Current projects she leads include:

- Creating an [older-adult cohort](#) to inform mental health and substance use disorder prevention
- Enabling [evidence-informed policy](#) to address Australia's opioid crisis

- Enhancing Pharmacist Involvement in Care in Medically Assisted Treatment for Opioid Dependence ([EPIC-MATOD](#))

## Member and Partner forum

### Previous RAIL forum



In our last forum held on 30th March, Professor Keith Hill, Director of the Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre presented recent research on COVID-19's impact on falls, sedentary behaviour and deconditioning in older adults and Associate Professor Janneke Berecki, Director of the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit at the Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) provided an update on state-wide falls and fractures in older adults. The presentations brought some food for thought and highlighted the needs for more research in this space.

In particular, there is a need to understand trends in falls and fracture hospitalisations post-covid. International data is indicating a likely substantial growth in falls related hospitalisations projected for coming years, associated with reduced resumption of pre-covid levels of physical activity by older people, associated deconditioning, poorer management of chronic diseases during the pandemic, all contributing to increased risk of falls longer term. Additional impacts of the covid-19 lockdowns included social isolation and increased loneliness for many older people, that may also contribute to increased risk of falls. There is an urgent need for a national falls prevention action plan and appropriate resourcing to address the sustained increases in national falls prevention hospitalisations in the past 10-15 years pre-covid, as well as the projected increases post-covid.

Over 185 people attended the forum which demonstrates the importance and interest on this topic. Thank you to Professor Keith Hill and Associate Professor Janneke Berecki for their excellent presentations!

## Upcoming RAIL forum

Our next forum titled *Social Prescribing and Older Adults* will be held on Wednesday 26th April, 10.00-11.00am, AEST.

Social prescribing is gaining popularity worldwide as a means of connecting patients to a variety of non-clinical services in the community, such as volunteering, art, gardening, cookery, and sports, to improve health outcomes. In this one-hour, free, online forum, three presenters from Canada involved with social prescribing, Professor Maureen Ashe and Sanya Grover from the University of British Columbia, and Bobbi Symes from United Way British Columbia, will provide an overview of social prescribing, summarise the evidence for social prescribing and older adults, and discuss current social prescribing projects underway in British Columbia Canada.

An event flyer will be circulated shortly. If you would like to register now, please click on the link below:

[Register now](#)

## RAIL paper of the month

### Outcome domains measured in randomized controlled trials of physical activity for older adults: A rapid review

Mackey DC, **Ekegren CL**, Baldwin C, Young PJ, Gray SM, Ciok A, Wong A.

## **Abstract**

### **Background**

Toward development of a core outcome set for randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of physical activity (PA) interventions for older adults, the purpose of this study was to identify outcome domains and subdomains ('what' was measured) in previously published RCTs of PA for older adults.

### **Methods**

We conducted a rapid review and searched Ovid MEDLINE for recently-published (2015-2021), English-language, RCTs of PA interventions for older adults (mean age 60+ yrs). We limited to articles published in Web of Science top-10 journals in general and internal medicine, geriatrics and gerontology, rehabilitation, and sports science. Two reviewers independently completed eligibility screening; two other reviewers abstracted trial descriptors and study outcomes. We classified study outcomes according to the standard outcome classification taxonomy endorsed by the Core Outcome Measures in Effectiveness Trials Initiative.

### **Results**

Our search yielded 548 articles; 67 articles were eligible to be included. Of these, 82% were efficacy/effectiveness trials, 85% included both male and female participants, and 84% recruited community-dwelling older adults. Forty percent of articles reported on interventions that involved a combination of group and individual PAs, and 60% involved a combination of PA modes (e.g., aerobic, resistance). Trial sample size ranged from 14 to 2157 participants, with median (IQR) of 94 (57-517); 28,649 participants were included across all trials. We identified 21 unique outcome domains, spanning 4/5 possible core areas (physiological/clinical; life impact; resource use; adverse events). The five most commonly reported outcome domains were physical functioning (included in  $n=51$  articles), musculoskeletal and connective tissue ( $n=30$ ), general ( $n=26$ ), cognitive functioning ( $n=16$ ), and emotional functioning/wellbeing ( $n=14$ ). Under these five outcome domains, we further identified 10 unique outcome subdomains (e.g., fall-related; body composition; quality of life). No outcome

domains or subdomains were reported consistently in all RCTs.

### **Conclusions**

We found extensive variability in outcome domains and subdomains used in RCTs of PA for older adults, reflecting the broad range of potential health benefits derived from PA and also investigator interest to monitor a range of safety parameters related to adverse events. This study will inform development of a core outcome set to improve outcome reporting consistency and evidence quality.

Mackey DC, **Ekegren CL**, Baldwin C, Young PJ, Gray SM, Ciok A, Wong A. Outcome domains measured in randomized controlled trials of physical activity for older adults: A rapid review. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act*, 20:34 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-023-01431-3>

## **Grant Success**

### **Development of consumer resources for ageing well with severe traumatic brain injury (TBI)**



The Rehabilitation, Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre has recently received funding from the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and icare NSW for the project: “Development of consumer resources for ageing well with severe traumatic brain injury”. The project aims to co-create a tailored educational resource with, and for, older people with TBI and their families and caregivers.

People with TBI have complex health needs, not only following their injury, but throughout their life, and these are made more complex in older age. In foundational research, funded by the TAC and icare NSW it was evident that there is a lack, both locally and internationally, of consumer-friendly resources providing consistent, evidence-based health information for people ageing with TBI.

The Monash University team is led by Dr Christina Ekegren (RAIL) with Associate Professor Libby Callaway as co-investigator. In NSW, the project is led by Professor Ian Cameron (John Walsh Centre for Rehabilitation Research) with co-investigators including Professor Susan Kurrle, Professor Grahame Simpson, Dr Candice McBain and Dr Liz Gill.

The new knowledge generated by this project will assist older people and/or their families to live well with TBI, and help TAC and icare claims managers to identify ageing specific health and well-being needs early, proactively plan, and tailor supports/services for clients living with TBI.

## **MRFF grant success - Outcome from a RAIL Early - Mid Career Researcher Seed Grant**



A team led by Dr Susie Cartledge from the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Monash University with colleagues from Monash University, Deakin University, the University of Sydney, the Australian Centre for Heart Health, and consumer co-investigators Mr Cyril Hennequin

and Ms Kerry Bratby was recently awarded a MRFF Consumer Led Research grant (\$598,391 over three years) for their project titled '***HeartPath+: Targeting self-efficacy and health literacy through patient education to prevent recurrent heart events in Australians with heart disease***'.

**Project summary:** Modifiable risk factors account for 80% of heart disease and secondary prevention is critical to living a long and healthy life. Therefore, identifying strategies to support patients and families in risk factor management is essential. We will target self-efficacy and comprehensive health literacy to begin to build self-efficacy for risk factor management to lead to behaviour changes.

Consumers have told us in our previous qualitative and co-design research that they have unmet information and education needs and find it difficult to navigate the fragmented healthcare system. They would like a simple digital intervention to address these needs.

Through RAIL seed funding we have developed an initial co-designed website prototype (HeartPath) which will be extended to become HeartPath+. New features will be guided by the Health Literacy Intervention Model and designed through co-design. We will add screening and tailored information for key heart disease risk factors and expand the website to cater for culturally and linguistically diverse patients and families. We will then conduct a pilot effectiveness/implementation study at one site.

This is the current iteration of the website/intervention, that has just completed some user testing (development and user testing paper in progress) and this digital intervention will be improved through this grant to become HeartPath+:

## HEART PATH

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Welcome to HeartPath. We're here to guide you through your journey from being in hospital to cardiac rehabilitation, and beyond.

Here you'll find information about what you can expect at each step of your journey, reasons to go to cardiac rehabilitation, patient stories, and additional resources.



[Start Your Journey](#)

## First RAIL PhD student submits her PhD



*Professor Keith Hill, Yulisna Mutia Sari and Professor Terry Haines*

Yulisna Mutia Sari, a physiotherapist from Indonesia, is the first RAIL PhD student to submit her PhD (on 7 March). Yulisna's PhD was titled: *Physiotherapy practice and exercise program delivery and outcomes for community-living older people with dementia in developing countries including Indonesia*. Her thesis involved a systematic review and three studies. Her main study highlighted the feasibility, safety and indicators of effectiveness of a telehealth approach to support exercise delivery to people with dementia living in Indonesia, supported by their carer/s. Yulisna's supervisors were Professor Keith Hill and Dr Angel Lee (Rehabilitation Ageing and Independent Living Research Centre) and Associate Professor Elissa Burton (Curtin University). Congratulations to Yulisna on reaching the submission stage, and demonstrating substantial resilience and flexibility in completing these studies through the covid challenges over the past few years.

**RAIL Early to Mid Career Seed grant - 2023 round currently open**

The 2023 round of RAIL seeding grants is currently open and will close on Friday 21st April 2023 (COB).

A total of \$30,000 is available for this round of RAIL Early to Mid Career Researchers (EMCR) grants, with individual applications able to apply for up to \$15,000.

The objectives of this scheme are to:

- Support early-mid career researchers with high research potential to progress their research careers by funding high quality research projects and pilot research projects on a competitive basis
- Encourage cross disciplinary research collaboration
- Enhance the staff member's competitiveness in bidding for external research funds
- Provide experience in preparing a grant application for peer review

- Provide research funding for projects that are strategically aligned with RAIL's research priorities
- Provide an opportunity for research mentorship

Given RAIL's focus on building research on the Peninsula campus, projects need to include at least one researcher based at the Peninsula campus of Monash University.

Successful Chief Investigators from the previous rounds are ineligible to apply as Chief Investigator in this round, but can be an Associate Investigator.

If you have any questions about the scheme, please don't hesitate to contact us.

To obtain a copy of the guidelines and application form please click on the following link:

[RAIL 2023 EMCR Grant - Guidelines and application form](#)

### **Collaborative Meeting Between the RAIL Research Centre and the Sean Drummond Clinical and Cognitive Neuroscience of Sleep Lab in the Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health**

On 27th February 2023, the RAIL Research Centre hosted Professor Sean Drummond on Monash Peninsula Campus. The Sean Drummond Clinical and Cognitive Neuroscience of Sleep Lab delivers programs of work examining the role of sleep and sleep loss in cognition, behaviour, and mental health. Dr Aislinn Lalor from the RAIL team has an ongoing interest in sleep research, and was one of the co-convenors of the Australasian Sleep Association's 2022 conference, and Professor Keith Hill is leading the work on a Carer's Health and Wellbeing Clinic (with the National Centre for Healthy Ageing). Sean and members of the RAIL team discussed collaborative research and education

opportunities, including at the new Healthy Futures Hub, which they also toured together and will open at St Kilda Football Club's Seaford Ground at Belvedere Reserve in April 2023.



*L-R: Professor Sean Drummond, Assoc Prof Libby Callaway & Dr Aislinn Lalor preparing for a tour of the near-completed Healthy Futures Hub in Seaford*

## Visiting delegates from Japan

On 8th March 2023, the Monash Occupational Therapy Department hosted occupational therapy academic and student delegates from Tokyo University of Technology, Osaka Metropolitan University and Seirei Christopher University in Japan on Monash Peninsula campus. RAIL Independent Living Stream Lead Associate Professor Libby Callaway, and Senior Research Fellow Dr Natasha Layton, contributed to these discussions, with the School of Primary and Allied

Health Care Director of International Engagement, Professor Brett Williams. A range of topics were covered, including research opportunities across the areas of rehabilitation, ageing and independent living. Libby also coordinated a tour of the Peninsula Health Golf Links Road rehabilitation service with the delegates and Head of Occupational Therapy at Peninsula Health, Alison Lunt, with Peninsula Health an important partner in the National Centre for Healthy Ageing.



*Assoc Prof Libby Callaway (RAIL Independent Living Stream Lead and Occupational Therapy Dept staff member) with the visiting delegates*

**RAIL and NCHA researchers collaboration meeting with  
Newcastle University (UK) researchers**



On 8th March 2023, RAIL researchers Professor Keith Hill, Dr Christina Ekegren and Dr Angel Lee, together with SPAHC Head of School (Professor Terry Haines) and NCHA researchers met with Professor Lynn Rochester and Dr Riona McCardle from Newcastle University, UK. Professor Rochester and Dr McCardle presented data from their research, which had substantial synergies with research being conducted by RAIL researcher, particularly relating to improving physical activity for people with dementia, and improving health and wellbeing for carers of older people. The meeting progresses an existing relationship between Monash University and Newcastle University. An application has been submitted from a number of those attending the workshop to support further collaborative activities. Thanks to Associate Professor Michele Callisaya and Professor Velandai Srikanth from NCHA for organising and hosting the meeting.

## Ready Tele Go - Practice Guide for Family Centred Practice via telehealth

*Ready Tele Go* is a new resource on family centred telepractice that resulted from a research project led by Dr Kim Bulkeley from the University of Sydney Centre for Disability Research and Policy, in collaboration with Dr Genevieve Johnsson (University of Sydney Centre for Disability Research and Policy), Dr Anoo Bhopti (Monash University Occupational Therapy Department), Jenna Bongioletti and Dr Joanne Hinit (University of Sydney), and Associate Professor Christine Johnston (Western Sydney University), in partnership with Reimagine Australia.

The research team conducted a survey that captured the experiences of 259 early childhood practitioners using telepractice as part of their service delivery. Data were analysed to explore the practitioner's experience of telepractice and to create some recommendations.

For more information about this project and to access the resource, please visit: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/medicine-health/our-research/research-centres/centre-for-disability-research-and-policy/disability-workforce.html>

## Early and mid-career research support activities

Although the staffing level for RAIL at this point is small, we are keen to provide support for any early or mid career researcher that we can. We are happy to provide an external review perspective of grants you are preparing as one avenue of support. If you would like to discuss possibly accessing this service, please email Karine in the first instance ([spahc.rail@monash.edu](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu)).

## Member contributions

We would love to showcase current research from our members. We invite you to submit a short story (and relevant images) about any research you are working on that aligns with RAIL. Submissions are due by the 30th of each month to [spahc.rail@monash.edu](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu).

RAIL aims to provide an accessible ebulletin for all. Image descriptions are available for images appearing in the ebulletin, with the use of a screen reader. If you have any issues with accessing any part of the ebulletin, please let us know at [spahc.rail@monash.edu](mailto:spahc.rail@monash.edu).