

MONASH ADDICTION RESEARCH CENTRE

2024
ANNUAL REPORT

2024 SNAPSHOT



154 MEMBERS

MARC's membership now encompasses 154 academics from across Monash University.



229 PUBLICATIONS

MARC members published 229 peer-reviewed journal articles in the field of addiction, with 74% published in Q1 journals.



ALMOST \$19M IN FUNDING

MARC members received almost \$19M in funding to complete addiction-related research.



302 MEDIA MENTIONS

MARC researchers appeared in radio, TV, online, and print media over 300 times.

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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.

MARC now has 154 academic members across 30 departments in six faculties and two institutes, making us one of the largest addiction research centres in the world. Our mission is to provide national thought leadership, education and research excellence to develop, deliver and evaluate effective policy and practice approaches for addiction. We work in partnership to achieve this by:

USING DATA FOR IMPACT

We generate and leverage multiple unique datasets, and provide timely and accessible insights to drive policy and practice change.

TRANSFORMING PRACTICE

We work to transform practice through co-designing, trialling and implementing novel evidence-based approaches. We work with community partners in the Frankston-Mornington Peninsula, those with lived experience of addiction, and other key stakeholders to develop local solutions that can be scaled nationally.

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

We directly address stigma and community perceptions of addiction by bringing together multiple perspectives, including lived experience, through thought leadership, expert commentary and evidence dissemination.

ENABLING THE WORKFORCE

We build the expertise of individuals working in addiction and other frontline workforces, and the capacity of the treatment sector more broadly. We achieve this through the development and delivery of short courses, embedded addiction curricula and work-integrated learning opportunities. We work with government partners to deliver effective reforms in addiction and mental health care.

OUR AIM

MARC is dedicated to finding solutions that transform the way we think about and respond to addiction.



MARC Staff

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS

We are pleased to present the Monash Addiction Research Centre's Annual Report for 2024.

We begin this report by highlighting an important change in MARC's reporting structure. From 2024, MARC will adopt a calendar year reporting format. As a result, this report overlaps slightly with the content of the 2023/24 financial year report, which was released in May 2025. Accordingly, this edition is more concise than in past years, with additional details available on our website. We will return to our full-length annual report format for the 2025 calendar year.

We are pleased to report that 2024 was another outstanding year for our Centre, marked by significant achievements and continued growth in our impact on the field of addiction. MARC members across Monash University secured nearly \$19 million in funding for addiction-related research and published 229 peer-reviewed articles. These remarkable outcomes underscore the powerful influence of our members' work and the vital role of interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing the complex challenges of addiction.

In 2024, MARC also hosted a number of key events, including the inaugural MARC Emerging Researcher Symposium. This well-attended event brought together early and mid-career researchers, as well as PhD students from across Monash University who are engaged in addiction-related research. The symposium provided an important platform for emerging voices, and featured an inspiring keynote on clinician-researcher career pathways as well as a dynamic panel on academic publishing.

Our efforts to influence real-world change continued to extend beyond academia. MARC researchers remained deeply engaged with government and policy stakeholders throughout the year. Notably, in June, MARC and Turning Point researchers made a joint submission to the Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety's consultation on gaming machine monitoring arrangements.

Further, in September, MARC members A/Prof Jennifer Schumann and Prof Suzanne Nielsen, along with Sione Crawford, CEO of Harm Reduction Victoria, presented on "Safeguarding Victorians against potent synthetic opioids" at Parliament House in Victoria.

In October, MARC made a submission to the Federal Inquiry into the health impacts of alcohol and other drugs in Australia. MARC's influence also resonated widely in the public sphere, with over 300 media appearances across radio, television, online, and print outlets—further amplifying the reach of our work.

Several MARC members were also recognised publicly for their efforts, with MARC members A/Prof Ben Beck and Dr Susan Baidawi selected as Victorian finalists for the 2024 Young Tall Poppy Science Awards, A/Prof Jennifer Schumann awarded a prestigious 2024 TIAFT Achievement Award by The International Association of Forensic Toxicologists (TIAFT), and MARC Director Prof Dan Lubman awarded the 2024 Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists Victorian Branch Meritorious Award for his outstanding service to the Victorian community through addiction psychiatry treatment, research, leadership, and advocacy.

These highlights represent just a snapshot of the dedication and impact of MARC members in 2024. Their achievements reflect the strength of our collaborative model and the shared commitment of our members and core staff to rethinking how we understand and address addiction.

As we look ahead to the next 12 months, we are excited to continue to build on this momentum. On behalf of MARC, we extend our heartfelt thanks to our advisory board, theme leaders, members, research partners, and the broader community for their enduring support. We are confident that the work of MARC members will continue to have far-reaching impacts in the coming years.



PROFESSOR DAN LUBMAN AM
Director

PROFESSOR SUZANNE NIELSEN
Deputy Director

OUR COLLABORATORS

MARC members continue to collaborate with a diverse range of local, national, and international research and clinical partners. The agencies listed on our [website](#) reflect some of our key partnerships with research organisations, health services, and community associations.



MARC Theme Leader Group

2024 ACHIEVEMENTS – HIGHLIGHTS

MARC researchers were awarded almost **\$19 million** in research funding in 2024 to conduct addiction-related research. Please see the [Current Projects](#) page of our website for details of some of the projects currently underway. Below is one example of a project funded in 2024.

[TRANSFORMING OPIOID POISONING SURVEILLANCE THROUGH NOVEL TECHNOLOGIES](#)

Investigators: Dr Ting Xia, Dr Joanna Dipnall, Dr Jane Hayman, Dr Tina Lam, Prof Suzanne Nielsen, Assoc Prof Richard Beare, Assoc Prof Nadine Andrew, Prof Paul Dietze, Assoc Prof Nick Scott, Prof Mark Stooove, Dr Amanda Roxburgh

Funder: NHMRC

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 Departments (EDs) have enormous potential for drug harm and injury surveillance; however, inadequate coding of ED data prevents its use to understand policy outcomes.

In this project, we will transform the coding of ED data using innovative natural language processing approaches. This will enable automated, reliable surveillance of opioid-related harms.

Specifically, this project will: (i) transform opioid coding in ED data using novel natural language processing applications for text extraction using existing government ED data; (ii) determine if ED data can be further optimised using additional data fields not currently standard to ED data sets; and, (iii) use the improved data to conduct urgently needed analyses on the outcomes of recent opioid policies.

The outcomes of this study will (i) transform the way opioid harm is coded and monitored in emergency departments, and (ii) provide policy makers and clinicians with timely evidence on the impact of recent opioid policies

This project is a collaboration between Monash University and Burnet Institute.

MARC researchers continued to provide thought leadership in 2024, with pieces published in *The Conversation and Monash Lens*. Below is one example of such work.

[OPIOIDS MORE POTENT THAN FENTANYL HAVE BEEN DETECTED IN AUSTRALIA. SO WHAT ARE NITAZENES?](#)

Prof Suzanne Nielsen, Dr Amanda Roxburgh and Richard Armour

A new group of drugs called nitazenes have been detected in Australia. Concerns about the potential harms of these drugs, and that users do not know what they are taking, have resulted in government health alerts and drug-checking recommendations from the coroner.

In a piece for *The Conversation*, MARC researchers discussed the differences and similarities between heroin, fentanyl, and nitazenes and proposed public health responses to mitigate the potential harm of these drugs.

The work of MARC was recognised widely in the public sphere, with our researchers providing expert commentary to a vast range of mainstream media outlets. For example, Dr Paul Likhaitzky's research on the [use of MDMA for the treatment of PTSD](#) (published in a paywalled outlet) attracted wide media attention in September 2024. For a list of media highlights, please see our [website](#).

MARC researchers also published 229 papers in peer-reviewed journals in 2024. A full list of publications can be found on our [website](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Any enquiries or comments regarding this publication including requests regarding use or reproduction should be directed to the Monash Addiction Research Centre

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