



Government of Western Australia
Department of Health

Human Research Ethics Committee

Project Summaries for Approved
Proposals

October to December 2014 Quarter

Project summaries for proposals approved by the Department of Health Human Research Ethics Committee – October to December 2014 quarter.

The material contained in this document is made available to assist researchers, institutions and the general public in searching for projects that have ethics approval from the Department of Health Human Research Ethics Committee (DOH HREC). It contains lay summaries available for the October to December 2014 quarter.

Project Title	The real and changing atherothrombotic disease burden and secondary prevention		
Principal Investigator	Winthrop Professor Matthew Knuiman		
Institution	The University of Western Australia		
Start Date	1 January 2009	Finish Date	31 December 2016
<p>The burden of atherothrombotic disease is growing and predicted to continue to rise in coming decades. Persons with established coronary, cerebral or peripheral atherothrombotic disease have a significantly increased risk of future cardiovascular events in the same or different vascular territories. This is further increased in the presence of major comorbidities, including diabetes and chronic kidney disease.</p> <p>Data linkage in Western Australia provides a unique opportunity for a contemporary population-based study of this important clinical and public health issue. Our group has published at least eight papers from this project thus far.</p>			

Project Title	Birthplace in Australia: a population based cohort study		
Principal Investigator	Professor Caroline Homer		
Institution	University of Technology, Sydney		
Start Date	1 September 2012	Finish Date	31 August 2016
<p>Around 300,000 babies are born each year in Australia. The majority of births take place in hospitals although a small proportion occurs at home (either planned or unplanned) or in birth centres. In Australia, it is not known to what extent the place of birth impacts on the outcomes for mothers and babies. High-quality data on the risks and benefits of giving birth in different settings must be made available to women, policy makers and service providers. This linked study aims to produce such data using a national approach of all women who have given birth since 2000.</p>			

Project Title	Pterygia and skin cancer in Western Australia		
Principal Investigator	Winthrop Professor David Mackay		
Institution	The University of Western Australia		
Start Date	1 July 2015	Finish Date	31 July 2018
<p>This project will determine whether there is an association between the development of pterygia on the anterior surface of the eye in early life and the subsequent incidence of developing skin cancers.</p> <p>Pterygia are a relatively frequent occurrence in young to middle aged people in Western Australia, particularly if they are surfers, sailors or fishermen or employed in outdoor activities such as farmers or in construction trades. Pterygia affecting adolescents in Western Australia is considered rare. Both pterygium of the eye and skin cancers have been shown to be more common in people who spend extended periods of time exposed to the sun or ultra violet (UV) light. This study will determine whether there is a significant difference in the number of skin cancers in those people who have developed a pterygium compared with a control group of people with no history of pterygia. This knowledge will be a useful public health tool to alert and educate individuals about sun exposure. It will also provide data to aid in preserving and protecting sight in affected individuals but will also reduce the risk of developing life threatening skin cancers later in life.</p>			

Project Title	Impact of neuropsychological evaluation on hospital presentations, admission rates and length of stay and in a sample of general medical patients		
Principal Investigator	Ms Rachel Zombor		
Institution	Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital		
Start Date	1 December 2013	Finish Date	31 December 2015
<p>This project will evaluate whether the number of emergency department presentations, hospital admissions and total days spent in hospital was impacted upon by neuropsychological assessment. Specifically, the project will analyse five years of data for 81 patients admitted to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital who were referred for neuropsychological assessment. We will be considering hospital presentations, admissions and total bed days in the 12 months before and after the hospital admission in which the neuropsychological evaluation occurred.</p>			

Project Title	Leading change in the turbulent and complex public health sector - a case study of an Australian public health system		
Principal Investigator	Associate Professor Linley Lord		
Institution	Curtin University		
Start Date	1 January 2015	Finish Date	31 December 2017
<p>The Western Australian state run public health system (WA Health) is implementing a number of significant and far reaching changes within a context of widespread reform across the Australian healthcare system and the broader WA public sector. All these reforms require changes in structures, systems and processes at all levels, and many of them involve the same people. Furthermore, these reforms require large numbers of people, across multiple boundaries, to work in a range of new ways. This descriptive and phenomenological/symbolic interactionist research project addresses the gaps in the literature by exploring the experiences of leaders in this complex and turbulent environment as they lead transformational change programs.</p>			

Project Title	Validation of influenza data as measured by the seasonal influenza vaccine		
Principal Investigator	Ms Annette Regan		
Institution	Department of Health		
Start Date	1 December 2014	Finish Date	31 December 2016
<p>Each year the Western Australian Department of Health distributes over 450,000 doses of trivalent influenza vaccine under the National Immunisation Program. However, limited information is available on the proportion of the population immunised against influenza and the effectiveness of the seasonal influenza vaccine in preventing infections. The seasonal influenza vaccination module, a new data extraction tool, was trialled for collecting such information, and initial results indicate it is a potential resource for improving public health knowledge regarding vaccination coverage and effectiveness. However, the validity of the data collected through this system has not yet been established. The goal of this project is to assess the quality of information collected by the seasonal influenza vaccination module in general practice.</p>			

Project Title	Survey of antenatal influenza vaccination uptake in 2014, and the association between maternal antenatal influenza vaccination uptake and childhood immunisation status at 2, 4, 6 and 12 months.		
Principal Investigator	Dr Donna Mak		
Institution	Department of Health		
Start Date	15 November 2014	Finish Date	31 December 2016
<p>Influenza vaccination has been recommended and funded by the Australian government for pregnant women in Australia since 2009. Uptake improved from 10% in 2009 to 36% in 2013, but is still sub-optimal. Ongoing monitoring is required to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to improve uptake.</p> <p>Antenatal pertussis vaccination was introduced in England in 2014 and is being considered in Australia. This survey will provide valuable baseline data to evaluate uptake of antenatal pertussis vaccine if it is introduced in Australia. In addition, this survey will investigate the association between maternal and childhood immunisations. Little is known about the relationship, if any, between antenatal and paediatric immunisation programs and whether vaccinated mothers will have their children vaccinated against vaccine preventable diseases. This project aims to examine whether the mother's acceptance of vaccination during pregnancy has an impact on the immunisation status of her child. This information can be used to target vaccination campaigns and promote healthy communities.</p>			

Project Title	What influences the outcomes for patients undergoing upper gastro-intestinal surgery as treatment for cancer?		
Principal Investigator	Assistant Professor Angela Ives		
Institution	The University of Western Australia		
Start Date	1 January 2015	Finish Date	31 December 2016
<p>People diagnosed with upper gastro-intestinal cancers have poor outcomes. Few have surgery because their disease is too advanced at diagnosis. For those that do, surgery can be complex. When this surgery is performed in specialist units the patient outcomes are better.</p> <p>In WA, changes to surgical services have begun to ensure patient outcomes are improved. To alter health service delivery and improve patient care, change has to be supported by consumers, clinicians, managers and government. This project aims to explore whether change to surgical service delivery has been supported and had a positive impact on outcomes for patients undergoing upper gastro-intestinal surgery for cancer in WA.</p>			

Project Title	The cost of injury in Western Australia: an overview of total and health system costs		
Principal Investigator	Ms Delia Hendrie		
Institution	Curtin University		
Start Date	1 January 2013	Finish Date	31 December 2016
<p>The study examines the cost of all cause injury in WA. Data from multiple sources will be used to construct a dataset recording the utilisation and costs of injury. These injury costs will be analysed by injury type, cause of injury, injury severity, age group, gender, location of residence, socio-economic status and Aboriginal status. For road-related injury cases, additional analysis to those conducted for all cause injury cases will be conducted by accident type, road user type, crash circumstances and occupant characteristics. Risk factors associated with high cost injury cases will be identified for all cause injury cases, with additional analyses conducted for road-related injury cases. As part of the study, different measures of injury severity will be assessed to evaluate their usefulness in facilitating the use of administrative data to examine injury costs by severity level.</p>			

Project Title	Monitoring coronary heart disease in the modern era		
Principal Investigator	Associate Professor Frank Sanfilippo		
Institution	The University of Western Australia		
Start Date	17 March 2014	Finish Date	31 December 2017
<p>There is compelling evidence for drug therapy in the secondary prevention of coronary heart disease. The evidence relates to four groups of drugs that improve outcomes: antiplatelets (e.g. aspirin, clopidogrel, dual antiplatelet therapy), beta blockers, lipid-lowering drugs (mostly statins) and angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACEI) or Angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARB). The use of evidence-based medication at discharge from Perth hospitals (public and private) in patients with acute coronary syndrome has increased between 1998 and 2003, but only 50% of patients were on all 4 drug groups. Furthermore, the extent of continuity and adherence with these drugs after discharge is unknown. Another unknown is the optimum duration of dual antiplatelet therapy in patients receiving coronary artery stents. The population-based datasets we have established will allow us to investigate such clinical questions.</p>			

Project Title	Assessing the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of targeted advance care planning interventions among patients with severe respiratory disease in a tertiary hospital and in a rural setting		
Principal Investigator	Dr Craig Sinclair		
Institution	The University of Western Australia		
Start Date	1 April 2014	Finish Date	30 June 2016
<p>Advance care planning (ACP) has been shown to improve the quality of care and satisfaction with care for patients with chronic or terminal conditions. This study examines the impact of a formal ACP program compared to standard care, upon a group of patients with chronic respiratory conditions (respiratory malignancy, interstitial lung disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) in both a tertiary metropolitan and rural primary care setting.</p> <p>The study seeks to examine whether:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systematic approach to facilitating ACP results in higher uptake of ACP; 2. Clinical practice improvement methods can be applied to develop and refine the health system's response to ACP; 3. These interventions are feasible, acceptable and cost-effective in metropolitan and rural settings. 			

Project Title	Telehealth remote monitoring for people with multiple chronic conditions		
Principal Investigator	Associate Professor Rachael Moorin		
Institution	Silver Chain		
Start Date	1 March 2013	Finish Date	31 March 2015
<p>The study is a trial of electronic remote monitoring for people with multiple chronic illnesses. The participants are provided with equipment and trained to measure their vital signs daily which are then reviewed remotely by a nurse. The aim is to promote early intervention to detect deterioration in the participant's condition before they require hospitalisations. It also aims to empower older individuals to take a more active role in managing their chronic illnesses.</p>			

Project Title	Self-perceived work readiness of recent graduates employed by WA Health		
Principal Investigator	Mr Brendan Robb		
Institution	Department of Health		
Start Date	22 September 2014	Finish Date	24 December 2016
<p>In June-August 2014, after consultation and a review of the literature, an internal project was undertaken by Workforce through which the colleagues and supervisors of entry level health professionals (ELHPs) employed by WA Health across 21 professions provided qualitative and quantitative survey data about gaps in work readiness in ELHPs' practice. This internal project established that there are currently gaps perceived in the ELHPs' work readiness. This project seeks to capture ELHPs' views on their pre-service preparation. Key gaps identified in the previously reviewed literature, executive consultation and the data from the internal project, will be investigated by the new survey used in this project, with additional open fields to allow the scope of gaps to extend beyond this field. It is hopeful that the ultimate outcome of the project will be improved work readiness of ELHPs, with benefits for patient safety, and workforce quality and retention.</p>			

Project Title	Modelling the public health and safety impacts of liquor licensing changes on communities: enhancing evidence-based liquor licensing decisions		
Principal Investigator	Dr Wenbin Liang		
Institution	Curtin University		
Start Date	1 July 2013	Finish Date	1 December 2016
<p>The ultimate aim of this project is to inform and encourage evidence-based liquor licensing decisions in WA as well as other Australian jurisdictions. The project will develop a model to assist in predicting the likely impacts of proposed/planned licensing changes on a range of alcohol-related indicators (e.g. emergency department presentations, road crashes, assaults) within WA and other Australian jurisdictions. The model will take into account the features of a specifically proposed change to the liquor licensing landscape in a particular region and the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the location in which it will occur.</p>			

Project Title	Time trends and risk factors for cancer incidence in people with HIV in Australia: a data linkage study		
Principal Investigator	Dr Fengyi Jin		
Institution	University of New South Wales		
Start Date	1 January 2015	Finish Date	1 January 2018
<p>This study involves the linkage of records from the National HIV/AIDS Registry, the Australian Cancer Database and the National Death Index. The aim of the study is to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine age-adjusted site-specific cancer incidence and time trends in people with HIV in Australia; 2. To compare site-specific standardised cancer incidence rates and time trends in people with HIV with the general population; 3. To explore whether increased risks of cancer in people with HIV are maintained at older ages, or tend to decline with age; and 4. To determine risk factors for individual cancer types including age, sex, HIV risk behaviour; and duration of HIV diagnosis. 			

Project Title	Cervical screening register of Western Australian infrastructure project linkage		
Principal Investigator	Ms Nerida Steel		
Institution	Department of Health		
Start Date	10 December 2014	Finish Date	10 December 2017
<p>The Cervical Screening Register of Western Australia compiles all cervical screening test results, including pap smears, cervical biopsies and human papillomavirus (HPV) results, from women screened in WA. The WA Cervical Cancer Program would like to perform a data linkage project to enable researchers to have access to linked administrative datasets that would enable further investigation into the detection and management of cervical cancer and its precursors.</p>			

Project Title	Using information in a mammogram to predict preventable chronic diseases other than breast cancer		
Principal Investigator	Associate Professor Jennifer Stone		
Institution	The University of Western Australia		
Start Date	1 March 2015	Finish Date	1 March 2019
<p>There is information on a mammogram that could be used for more than detecting breast cancer. There is increasing evidence that the appearance of breast arterial calcification (BAC) on a mammogram predicts the risk of other chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and end-stage renal disease. Our goal is to determine if BAC, as measured from digital mammograms, is associated with other chronic diseases in a case-cohort study of Western Australian women.</p>			

Project Title	The effects of rapid weight loss on mammographic density, a strong predictor of breast cancer risk		
Principal Investigator	Associate Professor Jennifer Stone		
Institution	The University of Western Australia		
Start Date	1 March 2015	Finish Date	1 March 2017
<p>Obesity rates are increasing worldwide and the associations between measures of obesity, like body mass index (BMI), and breast cancer risk are still not well understood. Increased mammographic density is known to be associated with increased breast cancer risk. This association is highly confounded by BMI. Mammographic density represents the radiographic appearance of epithelial and stromal tissue, as opposed to mammographic non-density which represents fatty (adipose) breast tissue and appears dark in a mammogram. The association between non-dense tissue and breast cancer risk is less clear but there is increasing evidence that local adipose breast tissue plays an important role. Our goal is to determine the effect of rapid weight loss, via bariatric surgery, on mammographically dense and non-dense breast tissue.</p>			

Project Title	Evaluation of the impact of a patient-focussed brochure on participation in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program in Western Australia		
Principal Investigator	Ms Kathleen O'Connor		
Institution	Department of Health		
Start Date	7 June 2015	Finish Date	18 December 2015
<p>The proposed project will evaluate a brochure developed to encourage participation in the national bowel cancer screening program (NBCSP). The brochure is a low-literacy, pictured-based, step-by-step guide on how to complete the NBCSP kit. Brochure content development was guided by a state-wide reference group, focus tested in five group sessions and relevant amendments included. The brochure will be submitted to the Therapeutic Goods Administration for endorsement. It will then be included in a randomized controlled trial in kits sent to eligible Western Australians over a four week period in June 2015. NBCSP participation will be measured to determine its efficacy.</p>			

Note: minor amendments have been made to summaries to comply with Department of Health WA *Health Writing Style Guide*



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