



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Department of Health Western Australia Human Research Ethics Committee

Project Summaries for Approved Proposals

April to June 2020 Quarter

Project summaries for proposals approved by the Department of Health Human Research Ethics Committee – April to June 2020 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 description/summaries of projects approved in the April to June 2020 quarter.

Project Title	Substance use disorder aeromedical retrievals in Western Australia		
Principal Investigator	Dr Matthew Coleman		
Institution	The Rural Clinical School of WA		
Start Date	1 March 2020	Finish Date	31 December 2022
<p>Inadequacies in primary and mental health facilities for rural and remote populations means that many patients requiring treatment for substance use disorders are unable to seek treatment locally. This lack of primary care often results in emergency evacuations performed by aeromedical organisations such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). Aeromedical retrievals performed by the RFDS for mental and behavioural issues due to psychoactive substance abuse represented 14.2% of the total number of retrievals for mental health conditions between 2014 and 2017.</p> <p>The purpose of this study is to characterise adult patients (18 years and older) that are evacuated by the RFDS for substance use disorders in Western Australia; and to compare their presentation, clinical outcomes and care requirements against a metropolitan based case-controlled group.</p>			

Project Title	Exploring choice of care for urgent but non-life-threatening conditions		
Principal Investigator	Mr Kingsley Burton		
Institution	Department of Health		
Start Date	12 February 2020	Finish Date	31 December 2020
<p>The purpose of this study is to assess how well patients are being cared for who have urgent but non-life-threatening conditions and to determine how services for these patients can be improved.</p> <p>This is part of a larger study that will result in new arrangements for access to care for urgent but non-life-threatening conditions in Western Australia. Emergency Department service providers and General Practitioners have already been consulted to seek their views about the current situation. This study will seek the opinion of patients and the general public who may access urgent care at some point in their life.</p>			

Project Title	What is the impact of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program on colorectal cancer outcomes for people over the age of 50 with severe mental illness?		
Principal Investigator	Prof Steve Kisely		
Institution	The University of Queensland		
Start Date	1 June 2020	Finish Date	31 December 2022
<p>Cancer is one of the major causes of death among people with a psychiatric illness. Previous research has shown that the number of cancer diagnoses in people with severe mental illness, e.g. schizophrenia or bipolar affective disorder, are similar to those in the general population. However, the number of cancer deaths in people with severe mental illness is more frequent than those in the general population.</p> <p>This study will use data to compare bowel cancer screening rates in people with severe mental illness to those from the general population. It is hypothesised that severely mentally ill people have lower screening rates and poorer colorectal cancer outcomes.</p>			

Project Title	Improving dementia statistics		
Principal Investigator	Prof Leon Flicker		
Institution	The University of Western Australia		
Start Date	1 May 2020	Finish Date	31 December 2022
<p>The main aim of this project is to develop and test a national, whole of population, dataset to monitor the prevalence and incidence of dementia in Australia. This will be achieved by linking routinely collected administrative data from the health and aged care systems, and conducting regular validation exercises to estimate over, or under, diagnosis due to differences in practice and patterns of service provision. Methods may include manual reconciliation between data sets, which provide different potential sources of diagnoses, and statistical estimation methods such as capture-recapture methodology. These two approaches represent two endpoints of a quantitative spectrum of methods to estimate under- and over-diagnosis.</p> <p>There will be close collaboration between the research team and WA Data Linkage Branch, in the first phase over the next 12 months. The second phase involves the linkage with data held by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.</p> <p>This study will examine the quality of dementia data from each component source and for the combined data, including under-counting and under-recognition of dementia, and accuracy of diagnosis of dementia type.</p>			

Project Title	Exploration of radiological pancreatic and renal density as a risk factor for subsequent cancer development		
Principal Investigator	Dr Andrew Redfern		
Institution	The University of Western Australia		
Start Date	1 May 2020	Finish Date	30 May 2023
<p>Tissue density refers to the appearance of tissue or organs as seen on medical imaging scans. It reflects the amount of fat (dark in appearance) and glandular tissue (white in appearance) and can be measured.</p> <p>It is known that women with high breast density are at higher risk of developing breast cancer. This study will consider if high tissue density increases the risk of developing cancer in other organs.</p> <p>Patients with pancreatic cancer have poor survival because the cancer is often advanced at diagnosis. An assessment will be carried out on whether increased tissue density in a normal pancreas or kidney increases the risk of subsequently developing cancer in those organs.</p> <p>This study aims to identify high risk patients for regular screening so diagnosis is earlier and survival rates improve.</p>			

Project Title	Assessing the risk of tuberculosis among all migrants to Australia		
Principal Investigator	Dr Gabriella Scandurra		
Institution	University of Sydney		
Start Date	14 April 2020	Finish Date	14 April 2023
<p>Tuberculosis (TB) kills more people globally than any other infectious disease. Although Australia has a low incidence of TB, her closest neighbours in south/south-east/east Asia and in the Pacific Islands have some of the highest rates of TB and drug resistant TB in the world. The rapidly increasing number of migrants from these high TB incidence countries to Australia requires accurate assessment of who are those at risk of importing TB into Australia. The increasing number of temporary short-term visitors and the introduction of a long-term multi-entry visitor visa, both allow visitors to enter Australia without any pre-screening for TB. Accurate linkage of TB notification data and immigration data is an important first step required to assess risks and better target potential TB screening policies.</p> <p>This study aims to develop a screening algorithm, based on these identified risk factors, which has a $\geq 90\%$ sensitivity for detecting prevalent cases.</p>			

Project Title	Is it safe to drive after common upper limb trauma? Identifying factors that increase the risk of motor vehicle accident after wrist fractures and upper limb		
Principal Investigator	A/Prof Dale Edgar		
Institution	Fiona Stanley Hospital		
Start Date	13 May 2020	Finish Date	31 January 2024
<p>Individuals commonly ask “when is it safe” to return to driving following upper limb trauma. Return to driving is a late rehabilitation goal required for independence, social and work-related activities. There are associated medicolegal and safety risks, if inaccurate advice is given to individuals with restricted capacity who return to drive. Conversely, delaying return to driving when individuals have regained their driving capacity increases unnecessary absences from work, related expenses and reduced productivity.</p> <p>This study aims to establish if those recovering from upper limb trauma have an increased crash risk post-injury, when compared to the pre-injury risk. Another aim is to establish which factors (clinical, demographic, injury-related) are associated with this increased risk.</p>			

Project Title	Improving joint replacement outcomes in Australia.		
Principal Investigator	Prof Stephen Graves		
Institution	University of South Australia		
Start Date	13 May 2020	Finish Date	13 May 2023
<p>Joint replacement is a type of surgery that is commonly undertaken in Australia. Incidence of this type of surgery has increased rapidly in recent years.</p> <p>This study involves creating a series of linked national datasets with the purpose of developing a national resource to investigate an enhanced range of outcomes following hip, knee, shoulder and other joint replacement surgery. The proposed research builds on the recognised success of the Australian Orthopaedic Association National Joint Replacement Registry (AOANJRR). While the AOANJRR has been successful in improving outcomes following joint replacement surgery in Australia, only two outcomes can be currently reported - revision and mortality. A wider range of complications following joint replacement surgery occur which can contribute to significant ongoing morbidity and cost. The project team is particularly interested in infection, dislocation, arthrofibrosis, chronic pain, thromboembolic, cardiovascular, neurological, respiratory and spinal complications.</p>			

Project Title	Cancer and mortality among Queensland coal mine workers		
Principal Investigator	A/Prof Deborah Glass		
Institution	Monash University		
Start Date	20 June 2020	Finish Date	11 December 2022

This is a large-scale retrospective cancer and mortality data linkage cohort study of coal mine workers. The mine workers' data from the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy in Queensland will be used to create a coal mine worker cohort by Monash University. This will be linked to national records of cancer and mortality held by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). The cohort's cancer and mortality risk will then be compared to the general Australian population to identify any excess risk by type of cancer or mortality cause, for example from respiratory disease. The data source used to ascertain deaths in the cohort will be the AIHW National Death Index and to ascertain cancer cases in the cohort will be the Australian Cancer Database, held by the AIHW.

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