



Faculty of Health
Research News July 2024



Faculty of Health

Research Newsletter July 2024

Transforming
> Tomorrow



Faculty of Health

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Welcome



The structural reorganisation of the SCU Faculty of Health, that took place in May 2024, meant that three work groups turned into four, four Chairs of Discipline were appointed but also four Deputy Chairs of Discipline and a Deputy Associate Dean of Health Research - Associate Professor Romy Lauche. Having welcomed Romy to the role of Deputy ADR on the 13th May she was thrown into the deep end when I went on leave on the 21st May! In addition, a few weeks before Suzanne Honan commenced as the FoH Research Grants Support Officer. I am very happy to report that everything went very smoothly during my absence and FoH research continued unabated (as I was sure it would).

Now that Suzanne has had a chance to settle into her new role she will focus on three main areas, related to staff research support:

1. Assisting FoH staff develop the budget for all research grant applications. In this role she will liaise with SCU Finance when necessary and work closely with the SCU Grants and Contracts team in the Office for Research;
2. Assisting staff to monitor and manage their research funds once they have been awarded and the project has commenced. Currently, Suzie is conducting a bit of a needs assessment so if anyone has any specific requests for help with research funds management please contact Suzie for a chat;
3. Developing up a series of guidelines and videos which will eventually sit in the FoH Blackboard site. These resources will help researchers understand and engage with grant application processes at SCU and grant funds management including how to engage research staff, how to procure resources for a project and how to get invoices paid etc.

Welcome

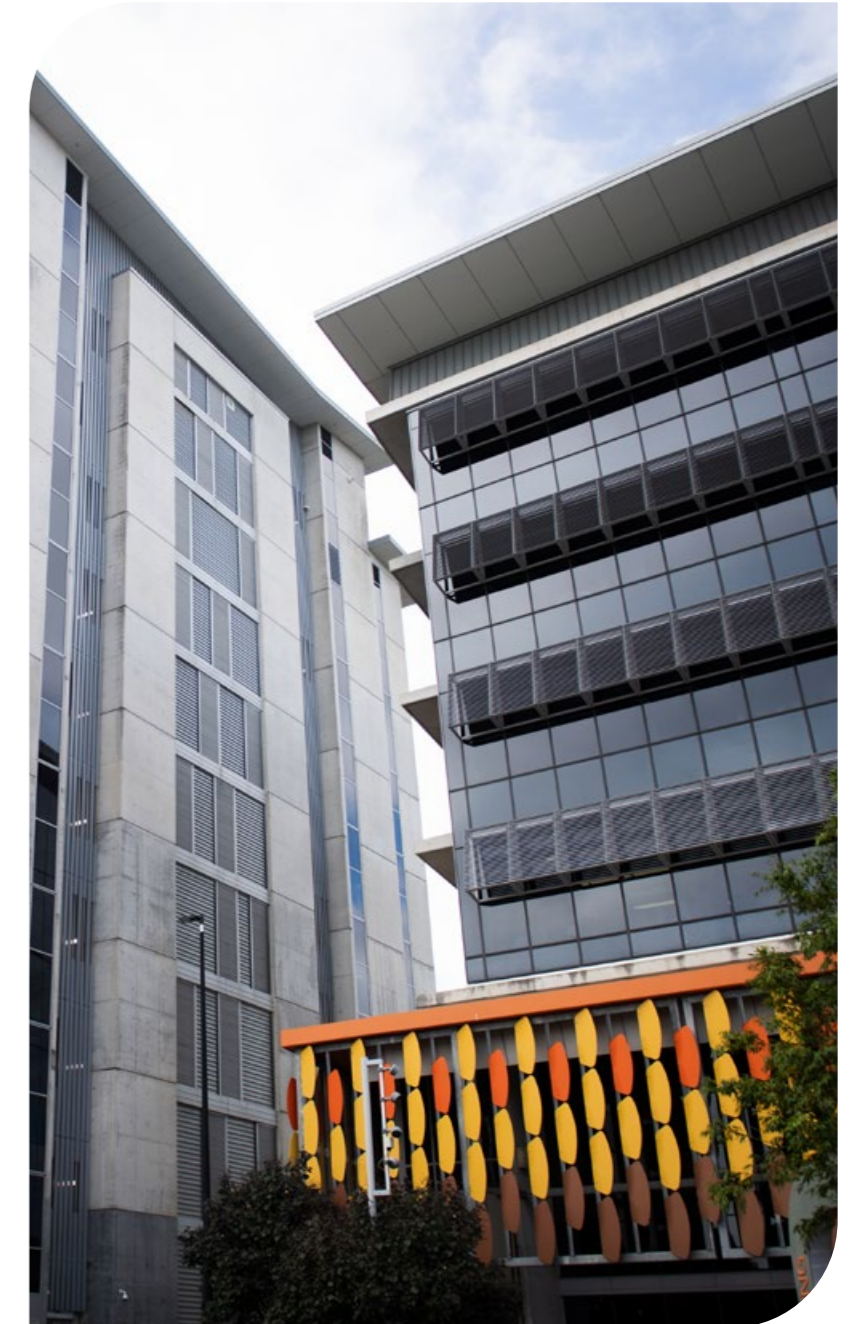
Associate Professor Romy Lauche has now stepped back from her Acting ADR role into her new Deputy ADR role. In this role she will have two main portfolios: (1) building a program of staff support and skills development related to research; and (2) developing some clear research governance processes related to all research (funded or unfunded) conducted on SCU campuses by FoH staff. Currently, there is a lack of consistent oversight of unfunded research activities.

Romy may need to ask a number of you to assist with these activities. I know there is a large appetite for the staff support and development program so please contact Romy if you would like to volunteer to be involved.

Please enjoy the rest of this newsletter where we continue to see exciting research outputs and outcomes and we get to meet some new staff and students.

Professor Marianne Wallis

Associate Dean (Research)
Faculty of Health





1

Centre updates



National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine

The National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine, led by Professor Jon Wardle, is a world-class Centre for education, research and innovation in health. The Centre was founded in 2020 at Southern Cross University Lismore, established through a generous donation from the Blackmore Foundation. The Centre offers innovative courses, pioneering research programs and professional engagement, and is committed to elevating industry standards, finding solutions to Australia's growing healthcare needs, and educating future leaders in this field.

Centre and theme updates

Centre Update

The National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine (NCNM) recently hosted its inaugural Giving Day campaign, aiming to raise an ambitious \$100,000. Giving to the National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine directly impacts our mission: innovative research, empowering education, and advocacy efforts that redefine the landscape of healthcare.

Giving Week was kicked off in the stunning Jubilee Room at NSW Parliament House with esteemed delegates and guests. It was followed by our first Transforming Health public talk at the Byron Theatre. Professor Jon Wardle was joined by Dr Janet Schloss and Dr Andrea Bugarcic and they spoke about how our Centre blends traditional wisdom with cutting edge science to tackle some of today's biggest healthcare issues. The final event occurred at the Gold Coast Home of the Arts (HOTA) with a networking and showcase of Centre stories of impact.

We're thrilled to share that our community's generosity has already contributed more than \$50,000. Further conversations are currently underway with potential donors which have the potential to help us meet our goals. There will be some very exciting announcements to make in the coming months. We extend heartfelt gratitude to all donors who made this Giving Day a success. While this year's campaign has concluded, our work continues, and any further support elevates our efforts in education, research, and advocacy.

On May 20th, we celebrated the International Clinical Trials Day, commemorating the day when the first randomized clinical trial began in 1747. Since its establishment in 2021, the Clinical Trials Centre at NCNM has achieved significant milestones. We have successfully completed half a dozen commercial clinical trials, involving hundreds of participants from across Australia. Our Clinical Trials Centre and dedicated team have expanded over time. We're now well-equipped to handle various aspects of clinical research, including evidence synthesis and Phase I-IV trials. These trials encompass safety assessments, dosing studies, pharmacokinetics, and large-scale efficacy trials conducted at single or multiple sites.



Photo: Dr Janet Schloss sharing findings from her research study on brain cancer and medicinal cannabis at NSW Parliament House

Currently, NCNM is actively recruiting participants for two clinical trials: one for Preventing Recurrent Urinary Tract Infections and another for Treating and Preventing Dizziness and Vertigo. Additionally, Dr. Janet Schloss, our Clinical Research Fellow, is collaborating on a ground-breaking clinical trial that explores the use of MDMA and nature-based therapy to assist individuals suffering from natural-disaster-related post-traumatic stress disorder in northern New South Wales. The project is led by Professor James Bennett-Levy and funded through the Medical Research Future Fund.

Find out more: scu.edu.au/national-centre-for-naturopathic-medicine/research/clinical-trials



National Centre for Naturopathic Medicine

Centre and theme updates

NCNM Research Project Update

Project Update, led by Dr Jessica Bayes

Title: An investigation into the diet and wellbeing of individuals affected by natural Flood Disasters

Since 2022, Australia has grappled with a series of devastating floods that have affected various regions, including the Northern Rivers Area, wider Sydney, South East Queensland, Victoria, and Northern Queensland. These floods have left a lasting mark on communities, infrastructure, and the environment.

One critical challenge arising from natural disasters like floods is food insecurity. In regional and rural areas, access to healthy and nutritious food can become severely limited. Surprisingly, there has been minimal research on the impact of floods on food intake, dietary changes, and overall nutritional quality—except for studies conducted in developing countries. However, even in developed nations like Australia, the aftermath of a flood often leads to food shortages. People may rely on emergency supplies such as canned goods, long-life milk, and packaged meals, which may lack balance and essential nutrients due to high sodium content, preservatives, and other additives.

Moreover, flood survivors who are displaced from their homes or awaiting renovations face additional challenges. Limited access to food storage and cooking appliances exacerbates dietary limitations during these trying times.

Recent research underscores the link between dietary quality and mental well-being. Therefore, a new survey aims to assess the dietary intake and nutritional quality of adults affected by natural flood disasters. By understanding this relationship, we can better support flood survivors' overall well-being. Adults impacted by flood events in New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (VIC), and Queensland (QLD) within the last 2 years can participate via online survey. All respondents can enter a raffle for a chance to win one of five gift cards valued at \$100 each. The survey is live [here](#).



Photo: Dr Jessica Bayes



Centre for Children and Young People

The Centre for Children and Young People is led by Distinguished Professor Anne Graham and has a focus on the rights and wellbeing of children and young people (0-25 years) in the key contexts in which they live their lives – family, school and community.

Centre and theme updates



A unique take on research governance - young people as key advisors on current research being conducted in NSW schools

The School is for Everyone (SIFE) project is funded by NSW Department of Education's Priority Projects grant to address policy priorities for wellbeing, learning, innovation and inclusiveness. This mixed method research, involving 10 high schools across NSW, aims to understand and improve wellbeing, participation and felt sense of belonging for high school students who may disengage from school. The research is highly collaborative, including in terms of governance, involving partner organisations (NSW Department of Education, and Office of the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People - ACYP). A feature of CCYP project governance is the involvement of young people's advisory groups. This project has two such groups – one involving students from Years 9-11 at Rivers Secondary College Lismore, and another involving young people across NSW from ACYP's Youth Advisory Council. Both groups have advised on the SIFE project since the outset, providing valuable insights on: project design; survey development; data analysis; and (most recently) knowledge exchange activities. These advisory groups of young people with very diverse life experience, bring a distinctive element to research governance, foster research integrity, and enhance the credibility and usability of the research outcomes. The research team is led by Professor Anne Graham and includes Dr Antonia Canosa, Dr Catharine Simmons, Dr Tess Boyle and Dr Donnah Anderson (CSU).

For more information on the SIFE project visit
scu.edu.au/centre-for-children-and-young-people/our-research/sife



Tackling discrimination on issues related to health

Dr Kathomi Gatwiri is one of Australia's leading African-Australian scholars. In her role as the academic advisor for the African Australian Advocacy Centre (AAAC), she advises on research protocols, including helping to design research programs that matter to the African Australian community. Her work continues to challenge dominant narratives and have an impact at an International level.

Her latest work is no exception. 'We Belong Here' report gathers 10 key findings on issues related to discrimination, integration, policing, education, and health that show that racialised exclusion affects people of African background in both policy and practice and complicates experiences of resettlement and integration.

You can read about it here: lnkd.in/g/xQB6e-Y



Centre for Children and Young People

Centre and theme updates



Strengthening relationships and connections for young people in therapeutic residential care

Dr Antonia Canosa and Prof Lynne McPherson presented at this year's Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) 2024 Conference in Sydney. They shared preliminary findings from their ARC Linkage project focused on strengthening relationships and connections for young people in therapeutic residential care. Their presentation titled, "They always want to hang out with me: How young people living in Therapeutic Residential Care know that they are valued, respected and cared for", focused on the practices and conditions necessary for young people to feel valued, respected and cared for as reported by the voices of young people in Intensive Therapeutic Care in NSW during qualitative in-depth interviews.

The project team includes others from within the Centre including Professor Anne Graham, Dr Kathomi Gatwiri and Dr Kylie Day. The full project team include: Janise Mitchell, Dr Tim Moore, Professor Robbie Gilligan and Dr Donnah Anderson.



Helping regional and remote communities access mental health and early intervention health programs through nature

Dr Kate Neale recently presented to mental health clinicians from the The Royal Flying Doctor Service as a part of their professional development team days in Broken Hill. Her presentation focused on the benefits of taking support sessions outdoors. She provided clinicians with insights into the theoretical underpinnings of the therapeutic benefits of time spent in nature as well as practical strategies for taking sessions outside including making outdoor spaces physically and psychologically safe and ensuring activities and programs are trauma-informed, rights- and strengths-based. Following the day, the team have reported back that the presentation has inspired real change in how and where clinicians plan to conduct their assessments and regular client appointments, looking now to move sessions outdoors and within their communities.



Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing

This research theme incorporates a range of disciplines focused on wellness, management of acute and chronic conditions, community development, public health and community health, and builds on SCU's foundations in mental health nursing, allied health, social work, community welfare, exercise science, public health, environmental health and maternal and child health. Health workforce development and health professional education is also a major aspect of this theme.

Centre and theme updates

MHPW members **A/Professor Gail Moloney** and **Professor Marie Hutchinson** were successful in winning an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant (Sept 2023- Sept 2026) to increase awareness about organ donation and registration in Australia's culturally diverse communities, with total funding of \$498,071 (includes partner contributions and an SCU funded PhD scholarship). Partner organisations include South Eastern Sydney Local Health, South Western Sydney Local Health, Shrimad Rajchandra Mission (Australia) Limited, and the University of Melbourne.

MHPW members **Professor Marie Hutchinson**, **Professor Brenda Happell**, **Associate Professor Jacqui Yoxall** and **Professor John Hurley** have been successful in the Rural Mental Health Partnership Grant Small Project Grants round. Including partners from Federation University and Headspace Coffs Harbour, the \$50,783 grant will be used to evaluate a pilot programme for parents and teachers of children aged 10 to 13 with mental health issues living in rural, remote or regional Australia.

MHPW members **Dr Kitty Foley**, **Kate Curry**, **Professor Marie Hutchinson**, **Professor Brenda Happell**, **Associate Professor Jacqui Yoxall** and **Professor John Hurley** have had the MHPW scoping review project published in the Australian Journal of Rural Health: Workforce strategies to address children's mental health and behavioural needs in rural, regional and remote areas: A scoping review. onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ajr.13119

Associate Professor Richard Lakeman along with **Professors Brenda Happell** and **John Hurley** have had two papers on mental health nursing accepted for publication, co-authoring with other leading mental health nursing professors:

- Hurley, J., Lakeman, R, Moxham, L, Hazelton, M & Happell, B. (2024). "Under prepared for practice: A qualitative study of mental health nurse undergraduate workforce preparation in Australia". *Issues in mental health nursing*. Accepted for publication.
- Happell, B., Moxham, L, Lakeman, Hurley, J. (2024). It takes it out of the textbook: Benefits of and barriers to expert by experience involvement in pre-registration mental health nurse education. *JPMHN*.
onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/jpm.13042



Health Services, Clinical and Community

This theme has three streams.

1. Health services research.
2. Pre-clinical and clinical research that involve a range of health professionals and biomedical scientists; and
3. Health workforce development for clinical service delivery. Nursing, midwifery, allied health and biomedical researchers work in multi-disciplinary teams with a range of clinical partners in this theme.

Centre and theme updates

Delirium ID toolkit boosts carer knowledge to prevent, manage the condition

Carers involved in a world-first pilot study have endorsed an online tool for assessing delirium which gives them a key role in the management of loved ones affected by the confused mental state.

Dr Christina Aggar, Associate Professor of Nursing at Southern Cross University and Conjoint Northern NSW Local Health District, is chief investigator and first author of [A Toolkit for Delirium Identification and Promoting Partnerships Between Carers and Nurses: A Pilot Pre-Post Feasibility Study](#) published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine.

The Australian-led international research, involving Southern Cross University, University of the Sunshine Coast, University of Saskatchewan (Canada), University of Canberra and Northern NSW LHD, showed delirium knowledge amongst carers increased significantly through use of the online delirium toolkit.

The pilot was conducted at The Tweed Hospital. It evaluated the effectiveness of PREDICT (**P**revention and **E**arly **D**elirium **I**dentification **C**arer **T**oolkit) to support partnerships between carers and nurses to prevent and manage delirium. The next step is to secure funding to develop a larger trial at hospitals around the country.

Christina was interviewed on ABC North Coast Breakfast and Triple M Gold Coast. The story also appeared in Northern Rivers Times, Medical Xpress and Healthcare Channel



Photo: Nurse Erin Davis (l-r), carer Kate Sliffleet with Associate Professor Christina Aggar.



Physical Activity, Sport and Exercise Research

This theme focuses on physical activity and sports performance. It also links with social, psychological, biomedical and biomechanical researchers in the service of illness and injury prevention, sports and human performance, physical fitness promotion and chronic illness management.

Centre and theme updates



Project Spotlight: Interdisciplinary Efforts to Tackle Chemotherapy-Induced Peripheral Neuropathy (CIPN)

In Southern Cross University's Faculty of Health, a committed team is addressing the significant challenges posed by chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy (CIPN). This common yet troubling side effect of chemotherapy affects up to 70% of patients within the first month following treatment including symptoms such as numbness, pain, and coordination and balance difficulties that significantly impair everyday functioning. Despite its prevalence, effective pharmacological prevention and treatment options for CIPN remain elusive.

Our project, "A Multidisciplinary Approach to Reducing the Burden of Peripheral Neuropathies in Cancer Care," brings together a diverse team of researchers across the Faculty, including Associate Professor Kellie Toohey (Lead), Dr Jena Buchan, Dr Jodie Cochrane Wilkie (all part of the Physical Activity, Sport & Exercise Research Theme), Dr Janet Schloss (National Centre of Naturopathic Medicine), and Dr Belinda Barton (Mental Health & Psycho-Social Wellbeing Theme). Together, they will explore promising interventions incorporating exercise and other holistic services such as naturopathy and acupuncture, which have shown potential effectiveness in managing CIPN.

A key component of this project is the engagement of patients with lived experience of CIPN. Through focus groups and interviews, we aim to understand their needs and gather insights that will

inform the development of our management framework. This patient-centric approach ensures that our research is grounded in real-world experiences, enhancing the relevance and impact of the interventions we develop.

This initiative is a collaborative effort that extends beyond our university. We are proud to work alongside researchers, medical experts, and consumer advocates to ensure a comprehensive and effective solution. SCU collaborates with researchers and medical staff from Griffith University, UTS, UC, and ANU. Additionally, we will partner with diverse healthcare organisations, including the Wesley Hospital Choices Cancer Support Centre, Cancer Care Coordinators at Tweed Hospital, GenesisCare, Gold Coast University Hospital, John Flynn Hospital, McGrath Cancer Nurses, North Coast Cancer Institute, and more.

Our project goals are structured to unfold in stages, commencing with developing a consumer-led, multidisciplinary model of care that optimises existing healthcare resources and improves patient outcomes. This initial step lays the foundation for subsequent actions. We've submitted an Expression of Interest to the HCF Research Foundation and will seek additional grants to support further stages. These funds will enable us to create educational strategies and tools to empower patients with knowledge about CIPN and to implement our program within the current healthcare system.

By integrating patient insights with evidence-based practices and expert collaboration, our project aims to significantly improve the quality of life for those affected by CIPN. We look forward to sharing our progress and outcomes with the community as we advance this vital work.



2

Publications



Publications

Faculty of Health staff have reported 51 peer reviewed research journal articles, five research book chapters and one non-traditional research report in March – May 2024. In addition, new staff have reported 42 peer reviewed research journal articles published from 2020 to 2023.

Publications

The NTRO was:

Williams, S., Gatwiri, K., Molala, M. H., Keith, K. & Zihabamwe, N. (2024). We belong here: framework for human rights and equity for Australians of African descent.

Some of our new researchers have also contributed to SCU affiliated publications, for example:

Korkalainen, M. J., McCabe, P. **Smidt, A.** & Morgan, C. (2024). Outcomes of a novel single case study incorporating Rapid Syllable Transition treatment, AAC and blended intervention in children with cerebral palsy: a pilot study, *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*, 19(1), 167-176

The following article was selected in Sports journal Editors Choice articles for 2023:

Climstein, M., Walsh, J., De Beliso, M., Heazlewood, T., Sevene, T., Del Vecchio, L., Adams, K (2023). Resting Blood Pressure in Master Athletes: Immune from Hypertension? *Sports*, 2023, 11, 85
doi.org/10.3390/sports11040085

Editor's Choice articles are based on recommendations by the scientific editors of MDPI journals from around the world. Editors select a small number of articles recently published in the journal that they believe will be particularly interesting to readers, or important in the respective research area.





3

**Grant and Award Success
Engagement and Impact**



Grant and Award Success

Successful external funding

In total, in the last three months, another \$589,122 of external funding has been fully signed off by the DVCR for FoH researchers.

Grant success

Dr Janet Schloss continues to successfully engage with a range of external companies to undertake clinical trials of their natural products and in this reporting period \$510,000 of this funding is associated with two of Janet's latest projects, a great result for NCNM.

Also in this period Prof Sandra Grace has successfully supported her HDR student Kirsty Greenwood to be awarded an Osteopathy Australia Student Grant (\$12,500) and this in turn allowed Kirsty to leverage a Sutherland Cranial Teaching Foundation of Australia and New Zealand Grant (which will be reported in the next newsletter).

A/Prof Christina Aggar, Dr Michelle Bissett and A/Prof Eric Brymer have also commenced a collaboration with Primary and Community Care Services which brought \$15,000 for pilot studies and Luke Del Vecchio received \$20,000 from Australian Taekwondo Limited for a study looking at the benefits of Taekwondo.





Engagement and Impact

Engagement and Impact

Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco Oceania Conference

On the 30th of May, Professor Gillian Gould attended the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (SRNT) Oceania Conference in Brisbane. It was hosted by the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence on Achieving the Tobacco Endgame and The University of Queensland. Professor Gould gave a presentation on evaluating the iSISTAQUIT implementation for training health professionals in smoking cessation care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pregnant women through the RE-AIM framework.

Co-designed with Aboriginal communities over many years, iSISTAQUIT consists of self-paced online training, brightly coloured and easy-to-use printed materials for health professionals and their clients, clinical software and pharmacotherapy. An engaging social media campaign and a supportive Community of Practice assist health professionals in spreading the smoke-free message and sharing knowledge and experiences. Forty sites participated in the implementation trial, which showed promising reach, effectiveness, and adoption. Numerous sites implemented and showed interest in maintaining the program, indicating it was feasible, acceptable and sustainable. The program is now in its scale-up phase as iSISTAQUIT Ngurrajili (isistaquit.org.au)

Professor Gould's presentation was well-received, finishing with a lively question-and-answer segment. International visitors expressed interest in using or adapting the program in their health services.



PhD student, Masum Billah, presented his paper entitled "Tobacco smoking of refugees and health promotion in high-income countries: A systematic review and narrative synthesis" at the 2024 O-SRNT Oceania conference on May 30-31 at the University of Queensland, Brisbane. Masum's four-minute rapid-fire presentation was well attended, with the health promotion needs of multicultural refugees relating to tobacco smoking of interest to many.

According to the review, refugees had high rates of tobacco smoking. Length of stay, nativity, and PTSD accelerated tobacco smoking and are likely to contribute to developing heart disease, lung cancer, diabetes, hypertension, and overweight/obesity among refugees. Culture and language-sensitive health materials, educational campaigns, and partnership development in refugee communities were identified as health promotion interventions for refugees.

Masum's presentation concluded that future public health policies may follow the Ottawa Charter's protocols and emphasise multisectoral collaboration for health promotion interventions by engaging all the relevant stakeholders. Co-design and more longitudinal studies are needed.





Engagement and Impact

Engagement and Impact

Nominees for the Yandarra Aunty Grace Roberts Community Awards

The Coffs Harbour City Council and the Yandarra Aboriginal Advisory Committee have announced the 2024 Yandarra Aunty Grace Roberts Community Awards nominees. Aunty Grace Roberts advocated, supported, and lobbied for better services, programs, and housing for the Aboriginal people of Coffs Harbour. The awards are broken down into categories to recognize outstanding members of the local Coffs Harbour Aboriginal community. The categories are;

- The Grace Roberts Memorial Community Development Award,
- The Aunty Award,
- The Uncle Award,
- A Sports Achievement Award,
- The Youth of the Year Award,
- An Arts & Cultural Achievement Award and;
- The Aboriginal Community Organisation/Business of the Year Award.

Southern Cross University's iSISTAQUIT Project Officer, Allison Hart, was nominated for the Grace Roberts Memorial Community Development Award. Allison is a Gumbayggirr woman local to Coffs Harbour. She has worked with iSISTAQUIT for 4 years facilitating workshops, community engagements and working closely with local stakeholders and community members to instil a strong foundation for iSISTAQUIT.

iSISTAQUIT was nominated for the Aboriginal Community Organisation/Business of the Year award. iSISTAQUIT is located at the Southern Cross University Coffs Harbour and Gold Coast campus. iSISTAQUIT partners and engages with local stakeholders, Aboriginal services, organizations, and the community to promote iSISTAQUIT training and resources and increase awareness about smoking cessation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in pregnancy.





4

**Faculty Researchers
in the Media**



Faculty Researchers in the Media

Faculty Researchers in the Media

Patents based on traditional knowledge are often 'biopiracy'. A new international treaty will finally combat this.

Dr Alana Gall. The Conversation.
3 June 2024

theconversation.com/patents-based-on-traditional-knowledge-are-often-biopiracy-a-new-international-treaty-will-finally-combat-this-231272

Alternative medicine in the spotlight after mystery death at wellness centre

Professor Jon Wardle. On 7:30. 30 April 2024.

abc.net.au/news/2024-04-30/alternative-medicine-in-the-spotlight-after-mystery-death/103787734

What is the difference between autism and Asperger's disorder?

Professor Andrew Cashin.
The Conversation. 22 March 2024

theconversation.com/whats-the-difference-between-autism-and-aspergers-disorder-223643

Autism awareness month: Why Asperger's Syndrome is an outdated term

Professor Andrew Cashin.
The Wire. 28 March 2024

thewire.org.au/story/autism-awareness-month-why-aspergers-syndrome-is-an-outdated-term

CBD to help manage anxiety in Adults with ASD

Professor Andrew Cashin.
ABC Northern Tasmania. 5 March 2024

dropbox.com/scl/fi/2s2rg5nonrc6x9z89fly5/ABCNorthernTasmania.MP4



5

**Researcher in
the Spotlight**

PhD Candidate in the Spotlight



Researcher in the Spotlight

Professor James
Bennett-Levy

Researcher in the Spotlight



Professor James Bennett-Levy

Professor James Bennett-Levy

In March 2024, James Bennett-Levy took up a research position as Professor of Mental Health and Psychological Wellbeing at Southern Cross University. He is the Chief Investigator of a \$3.8million MRFF grant entitled: *After the Floods: Evaluating a Stepped Care Model to Treat Chronic Disaster-Related PTSD*. The grant runs for 4 years from March 2024-2028.

James is delighted to be back at Southern Cross University. He did his Ph.D. here. "After 18 years working as a clinical psychologist, I was awarded a Ph.D. scholarship by Southern Cross University in 1997. My thesis topic was: how can we best train therapists? I looked at the value of self-experiential training for therapists. With the advent of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), personal therapy for therapists had fallen out of favour. Therapists were being trained in the use of CBT techniques. While many of these techniques were useful not just for patients but for everyone, for some reason there was no emphasis in training on personal practice for trainee therapists. So I developed a training paradigm called self-practice/self-reflection (SP/SR). Fortunately, SP/SR research took off and resulted in many publications, including a Guilford Press SP/SR book series for which I'm the Series Editor. Five books to date."

Since 2008, James has been A/Prof then Prof at the University Centre for Rural Health, part of the University of Sydney, based in Lismore. He's continued with therapist training research. In addition, he's collaborated closely with First Nations colleagues at UCRH to develop projects including Wellmob (www.wellmob.org.au), Australia's major hub for social, emotional and cultural wellbeing online resources; and Arts-based Compassion Skills Training (ABCST), which will play a prominent role as a first step program (low intensity) in the MRFF 'After the Floods' stepped care project. Research he undertook with colleagues on the mental health impacts of the 2017 floods was an important underpinning of the current MRFF grant.

As a trainer, researcher, and writer, James has an international reputation. He's taught in 27 countries and co-written 5 books for therapists, which have been translated into 12 languages. Always interested in new approaches to therapy, he has been a student of psychedelic-assisted therapy over the past 4 years, and now leads the MRFF project, which will include MDMA-assisted therapy as a second step 'high intensity' intervention for participants who may still be suffering with residual disaster-related PTSD.



Researcher in the Spotlight

Dr Sue Devlin

Researcher in the Spotlight



Dr Sue Devlin

Dr Sue Devlin

Dr Sue Devlin is an Authorised Nurse Practitioner with a Public Health/Communicable Disease/Immunisation background who has joined Southern Cross University as a Senior Lecturer in Nursing. Sue's program of research focuses on tuberculosis (TB) prevention and control from the perspective that TB is inherently a social disease.

Sue is a graduate from Southern Cross University in 1995 (BaHSc (Nursing), *with distinction*) and University of New South Wales in 2013 (Master of Public Health and Master of Health Management). Sue graduated with a PhD from James Cook University (JCU) in 2022. Sue's doctoral research was participatory action research (PAR) to develop understanding about TB *with* Aboriginal Communities in northern NSW, for health system change. The PAR changed the trajectory of a TB outbreak in Aboriginal communities the findings are informing system changes in Australia and in other countries where TB thrives due to the effects of colonisation and oppression.

Sue's current research activity is in Solomon Islands with the Baru Conservation Alliance (BCA) - a tribal alliance from the central mountain area of Malaita. A micro-epidemic is impacting the socio-ecological model that has sustained human, plant, animal and ecological life on Malaita for hundreds of generations. PAR principles are being used to explore and implement a community-led grassroots tribal TB model whereby community-based conservation/TB Rangers use culturally-aligned ways to help Kwaio tribes understand and respond to TB symptoms and support people through diagnosis and treatment. Watch a video [here](#) and read about the program [here](#). The BCA tribal TB model has recently been held up as a model for community-based TB programs in Solomon Islands and funding has been allocated to sustain and expand the model.

Sue often shares stories about her experiences as a TB-nurse and TB-researcher with SCU students and others to inspire people to think broadly about what they can achieve with their skills, knowledge and qualifications. Sue is keen to yarn and collaborate with students and academics with a shared a passion for enabling grassroots culturally-aligned programs to thrive, and inclusion of impacted communities in the governance over research, policy, programs and service delivery through ownership of decisions. If you would like to [get in touch](#), Sue would love to hear from you.



PhD Candidate in the Spotlight

Anastasia Ward



Anastasia Ward

PhD Candidate in the Spotlight

Anastasia Ward is a second-year PhD candidate at the Faculty of Health under the supervision of Dr Nedeljka Rosic, Dr Ramil Mauleon and Associate Professor Keith Chee Ooi. Anastasia's thesis titled "Genomic Variations Impact on Differential Phenotypes of Cystic Fibrosis" investigates the effects of genomic polymorphisms on the clinical symptoms observed in people with cystic fibrosis (CF). CF is caused by mutations in the cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator (*CFTR*) gene, making the *CFTR* protein deficient, dysfunctional, or completely absent. CF is an autosomal recessive disorder and one of the most lethal inherited life-limiting disorders impacting thousands of people all over the world. This complex, multi-faceted disorder has a wide range of symptoms, variable severity and a broad clinical spectrum of manifestations. The variation in clinical manifestations has been, in some parts, linked to genomic polymorphisms in other genes outside of the *CFTR* gene. Specifically, genetic variations in so-called gene modifiers (GMs) placed outside the primary disease-causing genes have been proposed to influence the disease manifestations (phenotype). To date, there is currently a lack of research surrounding genomic variations in modifier genes, particularly in response to therapies, including *CFTR* modulators or even over-the-counter therapies. Further, there is a distinct lack of evidence for a significant yet under-reported phenotype in CF--pain, let alone genomic variations in pain-related genes.

Anastasia's thesis aims to comprehensively explore the current scope, quality and validity of the existing literature surrounding genomic variations in CF, investigate the prevalence, severity, and clinical symptoms, including the measurement of pain in adults living with cystic fibrosis. Utilising bioinformatics and

computational analysis, Anastasia is also exploring the variations in genomics profiles of *CFTR* and GMs and their impact on protein folding and function. The outcome of this HDR thesis should provide a better understanding of clinical manifestations in CF, the impact of *CFTR* and additional genomic variations on the CF disease phenotype, disease progression and potential targets for improved CF treatments. Finally, Anastasia's thesis is envisaged to contribute to the development of a novel CF-specific pain measurement tool and deliver evidence to clinicians treating CF patients regarding the use of better tools for pain detection and monitoring that will lead to improved pain management.

Last month, Anastasia was invited to present the findings from her PhD regarding pain profiles in CF to clinicians from NSW Health at Sydney Children's Hospital. Currently, Anastasia is in Scotland attending the *European Cystic Fibrosis Conference*, where she is giving an oral presentation on her recent study surrounding pain in CF in Australia. Anastasia and her supervisors are very excited about the future of this study as they have established international collaborations with seven CF peak organisations, including countries in Europe, the USA and Canada, with ethics approval already obtained for the next stage of the worldwide study exploring pain in CF.



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Updates from the Library



Updates from the Library

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Sustainable Development Goals

Research plays an essential part in achieving the Sustainability Development Agenda, and leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals can enhance your research impact.

1. Familiarise yourself with the 17 Goals
2. Identify which goals relate to your research areas
 - a. Look at your research outputs in Scopus
 - b. SDGs will be “tagged”
 - c. Identify the relationship between keywords and the individual SDGs.
3. Map your research to SDG’s
 - a. Connect your research to specific SDGs
 - b. When publishing, include SDG-related keywords in titles, abstracts, and author keywords.
4. Expand your collaborations
 - a. Many of the SDGs are interdependent. Collaborating across disciplines will help address complex challenges to meet the sustainable agenda.
5. Quantify Impact
 - a. Track the metrics (citations, views, downloads, and policy influence) of your research outputs that have contributed to the attainment of the SDGs. Highlight these in your CV, grant applications and reports.



Updates from the Library



Updates from the Library

Research and Artificial Intelligence

Note. From Various computers at Computer History Museum, Mountain View [photograph], by sporst, 2009, Flickr (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/sporst/4098969735>). CC BY 2.0.

Queries about using AI in research have been on the rise. This may be due to some expectations vs reality mismatch regarding the ability of AI to deliver a systematic review in a very short time frame. Systematic reviews aim to identify, evaluate, and summarize the findings (synthesize the evidence) of all relevant individual studies on a specific issue and provide high quality evidence to health decision makers. Systematic reviews should aim to maximise sensitivity i.e. close to 100% recall, as you are trying to find any potentially relevant article, and multiple sources of information should be searched (Feng et al., 2022). This laborious process can deter completion and updates of systematic reviews (Feng et al., 2022). AI tools may help speed up the process of systematic reviews, and multiple AI methods can be implemented within one review (Blaizot et al., 2022). Currently there is good evidence demonstrating that workload improvements can be gained through automated screening tools, however, improvements are still needed in some models (Feng et al., 2022) and human validation is still required (Blaizot et al., 2022).

The library has put together two sources of information on GenAI tools:

1. [Systematic Reviews and GenAI](#), and
2. [GenAI for research](#).

In Summary:

GenAI can help to:

- Review the literature
 - genAI tools can be used to support literature searches by providing overviews of topics, brainstorming search terms, and mapping connections between authors and papers
 - genAI can provide basic summaries of topics and help identify seed articles
 - databases may also have genAI features which enable natural language searching and provide summaries

- generate plain language summaries
- screening literature can be accelerated with machine learning (e.g. Covidence)
- Publishing
 - Consider using genAI tools to check spelling and punctuation
 - genAI can assist with suggesting target journals
- Responsible use
 - Continue to use traditional bibliographic databases for collecting studies for comprehensive literature reviews
 - Consider that GenAI can generate false information and create non-existing references (hallucinations)
 - Consider the risk of bias inherent in generating GenAI output
 - Do not upload any data to any GenAI tool – this could breach subject confidentiality or not align with research data management guidelines
 - Consider using semi-automated screening tools to save time (such as Covidence)
 - Record all use of GenAI tools in data analysis
 - Consider seeking suggestions from GenAI for critical appraisal tools
 - Do declare when and how you have used GenAI tools for transparency
 - Review the publisher's author guidelines and ensure compliance before submitting a manuscript.

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