

# Academic Registrar Projects 2022



Our Department is characterised by a commitment to quality medical and nursing education and successful research programs in:

- Cancer
- Children's and Young People's Health
- Diabetes and Cardiometabolic Conditions
- Mental Health
- Abuse and Violence
- Data for Decisions

The Department of General Practice highly values our Academic Registrar training posts. Many of the excellent teaching and research practices in our Primary Care Community are inspired by General Practitioners (GPs) who have undertaken an Academic Registrar training post and many of our university based GP academics were once Academic Registrars themselves.

## Academic skills

As an Academic Registrar in our Department you will:

- be supervised and mentored in your chosen research project by senior primary care academics who are leaders in their field
- join a vibrant group of junior researchers in primary care including Honours, Masters, PhD and MD students with access to structured teaching on research methods
- attend our weekly Research Matters lunch presentations to expand research awareness and critical thinking skills
- join the Teaching and Learning Team and gain experience in curriculum and assessment design, examining and teaching practices
- have the option of undertaking the Melbourne Teaching Certificate which will advance your teaching skills
- receive monthly mentorship with a senior academic on your career aspirations, how academic skills may fit with your future goals, and on balancing your commitments during the Academic Registrar year.

## Teaching Skills

The Teaching & Learning team at the Department of General Practice play an integral role in the ongoing development and delivery of the Melbourne MD. Through an Academic post you will develop your teaching skills and learn more about the theory and practice of medical education mentored by passionate GP Academics at the department. Specifically, our Academic Registrars:

- Gain confidence in leading teaching sessions across a range of formats, from lectures to workshops and small group tutorials
- Develop skills in delivering online teaching sessions
- Contribute to curriculum development projects in the department
- Become familiar with a wide range of assessment tools including gaining experience in writing and marking both written and clinical assessments
- Contribute to our regular Teaching & Learning journal club that explores the theory and practice of medical education
- Gain exposure to scholarship in Medical Education through the opportunity to contribute to ongoing research projects with the Teaching & Learning team

More information and testimonials can be found on our [website](#).

Below are projects available for Academic Registrars in 2022. If you have a general interest in research and don't know where to begin to come up with a small project, we can assist!

Please contact Prof Meredith Temple-Smith- Director of Research Training [m.temple-smith@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:m.temple-smith@unimelb.edu.au)

### **Specific interests in General Practice**

Supervisors: Dr Lara Roeske and A/Prof Jo-Anne Manski-Nankervis

In this project the academic registrar will explore career aspirations and professional choices of registrars and medical students who are members of the National Faculty of Specific Interests. The project will aim to examine their perceptions of specific interests in general practice and possible implications for future work/careers. If successful in obtaining an Academic Post position, the academic registrar will be supported to develop the research questions and design, conduct the research, and present the findings to stakeholders; this may include the preparation of a board information paper and presentation to the RACGP Board. Additionally, the academic registrar will be supported to submit a research paper for publication and to present findings at a conference.

### **Learning through gaming – promoting hand hygiene practice in young children.**

Supervisors: Dr Ruby Biezen and A/Prof Jo-Anne Manski-Nankervis

Studies have shown that effective hand hygiene practice can reduce transmission of diseases such as respiratory tract infections and gastrointestinal infections, especially in young children. However, barriers such as variation of parental hand hygiene habits, concerns around young children being obsessed with washing hands, and views that children need to build their immunity through exposure to dirt hindered parent's motivation to develop good hand hygiene behaviour in young children. With the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that good hygiene habits are taught early. As children learn better through fun and games, this project aims to develop a game that is educational and fun for young children to learn about disease transmission and hand hygiene.

### **Influenza vaccination uptake in children under the age of 5 – what is the evidence?**

Supervisors: Dr Ruby Biezen

In the winter of 2017, Australia was hit by the 'worst flu outbreak' on record with more than 71,000 infected with influenza. Of all the children (aged less than 16 years) admitted to hospitals with confirmed influenza, 12% were children less than 6 months and 20% were children between 6 to 24 months. By April 2018, Australia was publicly funding influenza vaccines to all children under the age of 5 in most States and Territories. However, it is unclear whether influenza vaccination uptake has increased since this incentive and whether general practitioners are actively promoting this incentive to increase the uptake of influenza vaccination in this cohort. The academic registrar could undertake a study exploring influenza immunization in general practice using the Patron dataset or undertake a qualitative study to explore the perspectives of GPs, parents and carers on influenza immunization for children under the age of 5 years.

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## Does data reflect reality?

Supervisors: A/Prof Jo-Anne Manski-Nankervis

In Australia, over 10% of GPs contribute data to a number of different primary care datasets which are used to guide health policy and planning, quality improvement and research. But how well does this data reflect what is in the medical record? The Department of General Practice has developed a new dataset (Patron) that can be used for research and teaching purposes. This project involves a combination of literature review and an in-practice validation study to investigate the representativeness of data in the Patron dataset. Academic registrars may focus on validation of RACGP quality indicators or data relating to specific topics such as diabetes, osteoarthritis, cancer or antibiotic prescribing.

Further information about Data for Decisions and Patron is available here:

<https://medicine.unimelb.edu.au/school-structure/general-practice/engagement/data-for-decisions>

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## Exploring barriers and facilitators to implementation of a new quality improvement program in general practice.

Supervisors: A/Prof Jo-Anne Manski-Nankervis

Future Health Today (FHT) is a software program that integrates with general practice electronic medical records to 1) identify patients at risk of, or with undiagnosed or under-treated, chronic disease and 2) facilitate optimal treatment for chronic disease using audit, automation of processes (e.g. risk stratification, patient recall) and clinical decision support. FHT is designed for the general practice setting where most people with chronic disease present. In 2021-22 we will be conducting a cluster randomized controlled trial. The academic registrar will assist with the process evaluation of the trial, including conducting interviews and focus groups with trial participants.

Information about Future Health Today is available here: <https://medicine.unimelb.edu.au/school-structure/general-practice/engagement/primary-care-community/research/future-health-today>

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## Exploring general practice activity using large general practice datasets.

Supervisors: A/Prof Jo-Anne Manski-Nankervis

The Patron dataset at the Department of General Practice holds data extracted from electronic medical records at participating general practices. This data can be used to guide health policy and planning, quality improvement and research. This project involves a combination of literature review and a project analysing Patron data in an area of clinical interest to the academic registrar, such as diabetes, chronic kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, or antibiotic prescribing. Academic registrars will be able to participate in projects undertaken as part of the INTRePID group, a consortium of internal primary care big data researchers.

Further information about Data for Decisions and Patron is available here:

<https://medicine.unimelb.edu.au/school-structure/general-practice/engagement/data-for-decisions>

For information about INTRePID, click here: <https://www.intrepidprimarycare.org/>

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### **Experiences of violence for people living with severe mental illnesses.**

Supervisor: A/Prof Victoria Palmer Co-Supervisor: Dr Matthew Lewis

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The registrar will undertake secondary data analysis of data collected from a sub-sample of people who were part of a now completed cluster randomised controlled trial in the community mental health setting (The CORE Study 2013-2017) which focused on service improvement and psycho-social recovery using a co-design approach. Qualitative data was collected with a sub-sample of individuals' who provided self-reported information about experiences of violence in their lives using a novel qualitative timeline method. The registrar will work with an established coding framework to code the experiences recounted within timelines and explore these in conjunction with the published literature on violence in the lives of people with mental illnesses. They will consider current interventions and the findings to consider what interventions might be needed in this group to respond to experiences of violence.

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### **The social worlds of people living with severe mental illness and their carers.**

Supervisor: A/Prof Victoria Palmer Co-Supervisor: Prof Carol Harvey

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The registrar will undertake secondary analysis of data collected from a sub-sample of people who took part in a now completed cluster randomised controlled trial in the community mental health setting (The CORE Study) to improve service experiences and psycho-social recovery using a co-design approach. A sub-sample of individuals have provided information about their social networks and short weekly diaries. The registrar will analyse either the network maps and/or the weekly journals for patterns around social connection, loneliness and engagement in community life and consider this in conjunction with the published literature for people with severe mental illness. The same dataset is also available for carers who were involved in the trial.

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### **Social prescribing as a low intensity intervention to improve mental health in the primary care setting.**

Supervisor: A/Prof Victoria Palmer Co-Supervisor: Dr Cath Kaylor-Hughes

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The registrar will complete a pilot study of a social prescribing intervention to improve mental health in primary care.

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### **The multifaceted nature of depression in the primary care setting: patient experiences, health service use, treatments and factors related to depressive symptoms from the ten-year Australian diamond Longitudinal Cohort Study**

Supervisor: A/Prof Victoria Palmer Co-Supervisor: Dr Cath Kaylor-Hughes

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There are a range of mixed method, qualitative or quantitative projects available for completion from data collected within a ten-year longitudinal cohort study of primary care patients with depressive symptoms - The diamond Study. The registrar will use literature review, analyse survey data and relevant telephone interview responses to answer a research question related to one of the following topics: associations between depressive symptoms and gambling, what helps with recovery (pets, cinema or theatre attendance, creative arts--music, singing and dancing), volunteering and depressive symptoms, psychological treatments used for depression and, substance use and depressive symptoms. Research questions will include consideration of the primary care mental health context and general practitioner roles in relation to the topic of interest.

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## **Addressing the physical health crisis in people living with severe mental illness, the Assertive Cardiac Care Trial.**

Supervisor: A/Prof Victoria Palmer Co-Supervisor: Dr Matthew Lewis

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It is well established that people living with severe mental illnesses have higher risk factors for cardiovascular and cardiometabolic disease. The evidence shows life expectancy is reduced by up to 20-25 years for some people compared to the general population. The registrar may use data from within the PATRON repository (a set of routine data collected from Victorian general practices) to identify the numbers of individuals in primary care with severe mental illnesses who have markers of increased cardiovascular risk and the cardio related treatments, plans and referrals that may have been delivered. Or, the registrar will conduct interviews with participants engaged in a cardiovascular risk reduction intervention a part of the NHMRC funded Assertive Cardiac Care Trial (ACCT).

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## **General practitioner views on antidepressant prescribing and deprescribing.**

Supervisor: Dr Cath Kaylor-Hughes Co-Supervisor: Prof Jane Gunn

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Australians take more antidepressants than almost anyone else in the world, and the number of prescriptions continues to rise. This increase stems largely from rising long-term use of antidepressants, which is costly and may pose a number of health risks. Clinical guidelines recommend ceasing antidepressants when they are no longer required, however in practice this is difficult for a range of reasons (e.g., fears of relapse) and both patients and GPs require support to navigate the de-prescribing process. This project will involve collecting qualitative data as part of a large randomised controlled trial (WiserAD) to explore the views of general practitioners on factors and considerations related to antidepressant prescribing and deprescribing.

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## **How can general practice integrate online tools to identify and respond to family violence?**

Supervisor: Professor Kelsey Hegarty

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Safer Families Centre ([saferfamilies.org.au](http://saferfamilies.org.au)) has developed a series of resources and tools for clinical practice and patients. However, uptake of such tools is always challenging in general practice. This qualitative project seeks to understand how clinicians and their patients view technological interventions.

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## **The absolute taboo subject: how is sexual violence history revealed in clinical practice?**

Supervisor: A/Prof Laura Tarzia

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General practitioners have got better at asking about sex, suicide and drugs but still struggle with the issue of sexual violence. This qualitative project aims to explore how we can normalise questions about unwanted sexual encounters, particularly in adolescent patients.

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## **Period pain, endometriosis and chronic pelvic pain- can general practice have a role in prevention?**

Supervisor: Profs Meredith Temple-Smith, Lena Sancu and Sonia Grover

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Studies are demonstrating that recurrent pain contributes to the development of chronic pain; that there are no symptoms that distinguish women with pelvic pain with endometriosis from those without endometriosis, and that despite excision of endometriosis there is a recurrence of pain and repeat laparoscopy in >70% of younger women. By accessing the general practice databases we will explore current practices, and referral practices, in Victoria.

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## **Understanding and addressing the wellbeing needs of university students.**

Supervisor: Prof Lena Sancu

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This project will use a co-production framework with university students to begin planning interventions designed to address one of several issues identified in the recent 'Towards a health promoting University' Study. Single interviews or focus groups will be conducted with students to better understand the issue and work out what they may prefer in an intervention. This work could also incorporate a systematic review on available interventions for certain issues. Interventions could be designed to address: students' considering dropping out of studies; improving International students' awareness of and access to services for health and wellbeing; fruit & vegetable intake; physical exercise; depressive/anxiety symptoms; eating disorder; resilience; loneliness; or acculturative stress.

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## **Secondary data analysis of a university-wide student health and wellbeing survey**

Supervisor: Prof Lena Sancu

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This project will conduct secondary data analyses of the recent 'Towards a health promoting University' Study, which assessed student mental health and wellbeing and academic outcomes in a university-wide student survey. A range of analyses can be undertaken:

- Subgroup analyses by faculty
- Subgroup analyses by different groups of international students (major/minor country codes)
- Co-occurrence of risk factors
- Correlation analyses to identify clusters of students at particular risk.

The project could incorporate a systematic review of the issues globally.

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## **Understanding university student needs: following up the findings of the 'Towards a health promoting University' Study**

Supervisor: Prof Lena Sancu

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A number of different projects can emerge involving qualitative interviews with university students to deepen understanding around students' responses to the 'Towards a health promoting University' Study. Project topics include:

- Designing effective health promoting messages for international students.
  - Understanding homelessness
  - Understanding experiences of loneliness; social media use (stress and higher daily usage of social media).
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### **Using Patron data to explore adolescent health care visits**

Supervisor: Prof Lena Sanci

A contemporary study of adolescent and young people's management in primary care and frequency and reasons for visits compared to other age groups. This project will involve secondary data analysis of de-identified electronic medical record data via the Patron dataset.

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### **Using Patron data to explore changes in children and young people's health during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Supervisor: Prof Lena Sanci

A study of changes in children and young people's health care access during the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondary data analysis of de-identified electronic medical record data will be performed using data obtained from the Patron dataset.

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In addition to these projects there are also projects available in Cancer in Primary Care with Prof Jon Emery.