

University of Melbourne - Department of General Practice - 2023 Academic Registrar Project list

No.	Project title	Supervisors	Project description
1	Influenza vaccination uptake in children under the age of 5 – what is the evidence?	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.
2	Does data reflect reality?	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.
3	Exploring general practice activity using large general practice datasets.	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.
4	Experiences of violence for people living with severe mental illnesses.	A/Prof Victoria Palmer Co-Supervisor: Dr Matthew Lewis	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.
5	The social worlds of people living with severe mental illness and their carers.	A/Prof Victoria Palmer Co-Supervisor: Prof Carol Harvey	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.
6	Social prescribing as a low intensity intervention to improve mental health in the primary care setting.	A/Prof Victoria Palmer Co-Supervisor: Dr Cath Kaylor-Hughes	The registrar will complete a pilot study of a social prescribing intervention to improve mental health in primary care.
7	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	A/Prof Victoria Palmer Co-Supervisor: Dr Cath Kaylor-Hughes	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.
8	Addressing the physical health crisis in people living with severe mental illness, the Assertive Cardiac Care Trial.	A/Prof Victoria Palmer Co-Supervisor: Dr Matthew Lewis	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).
9	General practitioner views on antidepressant prescribing and deprescribing.	Dr Cath Kaylor-Hughes Co-Supervisor: Prof Jane Gunn	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.
10	How can general practice integrate online tools to identify and respond to family violence?	Professor Kelsey Hegarty	Safer Families Centre (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.

11	The absolute taboo subject: how is sexual violence history revealed in clinical practice?	A/Prof Laura Tarzia	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.
12	Understanding and addressing the wellbeing needs of university students.	Prof Lena Sancı	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.
13	Secondary data analysis of a university-wide student health and wellbeing survey	Prof Lena Sancı	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.
14	Understanding university student needs: following up the findings of the 'Towards a health promoting University' Study	Prof Lena Sancı	A number of different projects can emerge to explore if students with concerns in particular domains are actually accessing relevant support services. Domains for investigation: general health and wellbeing; mental health; risk-taking behaviours; psychosocial stressors; learning and academic factors; and social and cultural environment.
15	Using Patron data to explore adolescent health care visits	Prof Lena Sancı	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. This project can be matched with coursework in digital health via the Learning Academy at the Centre for Digital Health
16	Using Patron data to explore changes in children and young people's health during the COVID-19 pandemic	Prof Lena Sancı	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. This project can be matched with coursework in digital health via the Learning Academy at the Centre for Digital Health
17	Defining health policy and system needs for national scale up of a general practice-based diabetes prevention program for women who have had gestational diabetes (GooD4Mum)	Prof Dougie Boyle and Dr Rachel Canaway	Gestational Diabetes is an increasing health problem affecting up to 18% of pregnancies worldwide and is one of the strongest predictors of type 2 diabetes. GooD4Mum is a quality improvement collaborative program designed for general practice that aims to limit or slow progression to Type 2 diabetes among women with histories of gestational diabetes. The academic registrar will work as part of the GooD4Mum team which includes researchers from Melbourne, Monash, Deakin, Bond Universities, University College Dublin and representatives from RACGP, Australian Government Department of Health and Diabetes Australia, to undertake a discrete project, the outputs of which will assist in defining next steps for national scale up of the GooD4Mum program. The current GooD4Mum trial uses linkage between the NDSS registrant database and GP EMR data (the Patron dataset) to determine the sensitivity of using NDSS data or EMR data alone to improve recall and prevention among women with past gestational diabetes. The academic registrar may use Health Policy and Systems Research methodologies, including literature and regulatory review, in addition to stakeholder interviews, to explore multiple perspectives on the utility, feasibility and acceptability of direct linkage between the NDSS registrant database and GP clinical software systems.
18	An evaluation of the Mercy-Utopia Child Health clinic	Dr Lester Mascarenhas, Dr Dan Mason (community paediatric consultant), Natasha Napiza (social worker) and Prof Meredith Temple-Smith	Since 2020 The Mercy Hospital in Werribee has been running a monthly clinic at Utopia Refugee and Asylum Seeker Health, to manage developmental delays in refugee children. The clinic is a novel partnership with primary and secondary care and based in a community clinic that caters to the needs of the local refugee population. The clinic was set up with a view that this model will improve attendance rates and cost-effectiveness of interventions. This project will evaluate this clinic. It will involve completing a literature review and interviewing staff and patients about the benefits and shortcomings of this initiative.
19	Assessing the usability and acceptability of a clinical decision tool and care navigation for GPs to triage children and young people presenting with mental ill health.	Dr Cath Kaylor-Hughes Co-Supervisor: Dr Caroline Johnson	A qualitative study to explore barriers and drivers of a clinical predication tool for mental health in children and adolescents and subsequent care navigation. This study will use surveys and/or interviews to elicit GP perception on a mental health prediction tool to help triage patients and refine treatment pathways through care navigation in a local and national context.
20	Understanding the nature of multi-disciplinary working across care for the treatment of mental ill-health.	Dr Caroline Johnson. Co-Supervisor Cath Kaylor-Hughes	Qualitative study exploring current practice for multi-disciplinary working in the treatment of mental ill health. This study will use surveys and/or interviews to elicit GPs experiences and preferences for multi-disciplinary working in the treatment of mental ill health.
21	Using Patron Data to track treatment and care of adults with depression and anxiety, in general practice	Dr Cath Kaylor-Hughes Co-Supervisor: Dr Caroline Johnson	This project will use Patron Electronic Medical Records data to track the progress of patients attending their GP for help with their mental ill health.
22	General practitioner perceptions of depression and anxiety treatment for children in primary care.	Dr Cath Kaylor-Hughes Co-Supervisor: Dr Caroline Johnson	Primary and secondary school aged children are increasingly presenting with symptoms of anxiety and depression yet their treatment is often referred out of the GP surgery. This study seeks to determine the perception of GPs of their role in child mental health care and if there is opportunity to treat children and adolescents sooner and more effectively under within primary and community care.