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**Project 77: Consumer Directed Care in Home and Community Aged Care: A Scoping Review**

**Supervisor(s):** Dr Rachelle Arkles (Principal Supervisor)  
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**Project Description**

**Background:** Consumer Directed Care (CDC) is the current policy and service delivery environment for community aged and disability care services. While aspects of consumer direction feature in recent and past home and community care programs in Australia, the recently introduced Home Care reforms in Aged Care mark a significant shift from agency directed to consumer directed packages. Consumer Directed Care is premised on the principles of choice, control, independence and flexibility for consumers of home care services. Preliminary evidence is emerging of uneven knowledge, perception and uptake of home care packages under the new dispensation. The success of Consumer Directed Care depends on informed choices and access/translation of knowledge into practice, facilitated by necessary changes in culture, workforce and service model practices.

The Translational Health Research Institute is currently developing research and stakeholder partnerships in the aged care sector across diverse population groups and settings to address this need. These include with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Consumer Directed Care in the aged care sector offers the potential for greater attunement between formal systems of care (aged care providers and care workers) and informal systems of caregiving (family members, friends and neighbours).

**Purpose:** The purpose of this scoping review is to provide an overview of the emerging literature on consumer directed care in home and community aged care services in Australia and internationally; and to examine emerging evidence in relation to home care services in aged and dementia care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**Policy and Service Delivery Context:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations are ageing in line with general population trends and have higher rates of chronic disease, disability and dementia compared with the general population. The health and wellbeing of older Aboriginal people is an issue of major concern and caregiving is at the heart of Aboriginal families and communities. Aboriginal peoples’ preferences to care for the elderly in the home or in care facilities which acknowledge Indigenous cultural and caregiving preferences, sits well with the philosophy and values of consumer directed care for flexibility and choice in aged care.

Mapping the evidence base on CDC is an important step towards identifying the ways in which consumer directed models of care can close the gap between formal service provision and informal caregiving needs and preferences. Both the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the phenomenon of population ageing and dementia are two important research priorities for Western Sydney University. The Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing team in THRI is building its research capacity in both.
Project Aims
The aims of the research project are:

- To map the nature and scope of emerging evidence about Consumer Directed Care in the aged care sector;
- To examine the experiences and perspectives of multiple stakeholders in the field with particular reference to older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, their caregivers and family members;
- To inform the development and direction of research grant proposals

Project Methods
Consumer Directed Care underpinning the provision of home care services by aged care providers constitutes a new policy and service delivery direction. The nature of emerging evidence is varied and drawn from multiple sources. A scoping review is designed to map emerging evidence in a field of inquiry and to provide the basis for exploring its application in particular contexts of practice.

The literature review which the student will conduct under supervision will include the key steps integral to a scoping review. These include: identifying the key question and sub-questions; identifying the scope, breadth and range of evidence (including peer-reviewed literature, other ‘grey’ literature and social media accounts); establishing the review’s inclusion and exclusion criteria, database identification and search strategies particularly for the ‘grey’ literature, key search terms, approach to selecting relevant data, and documenting search strategy outputs; collating, analysing and presenting a summary of the data in diagrammatic and narrative form in accordance with scoping review guidelines. The student will have the opportunity together with the supervisors to identify the implications of the study findings for research, policy and practice in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context.

Opportunity for Skill Development
This project will provide an opportunity for the student to develop their skills in the following areas:

- Develop skills in the conduct of a systematic literature review (in this case a scoping review);
- Develop skills in information searching and the building of an Endnote library;
- Develop skills in the emerging area of ‘grey’ literature searching and evaluation
- Develop analytical and writing skills for publication; and,
- Develop content knowledge in an area of aged care pertinent to policy and practice in caring professions such as, medicine, nursing, allied health and social work.

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply
In addition to the generic selection criteria of the summer scholarship, the student will be required to be in their final years of an undergraduate degree (in either medicine, nursing, allied health or social work); have some experience of using databases for a literature search; good computer skills to search the worldwide internet and maintain a spreadsheet of results, good analytical skills; and demonstrate interest in areas of ageing and/or disability care.
Project 78: Mental Health Beliefs and Use of Mental Health Services by the Bengali-Speaking Community in Australia: A Rapid Review

Supervisor(s): Associate Professor Ilse Blignault (Principal Supervisor)
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Project Description
Migrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds face numerous linguistic and cultural barriers in accessing mental health care, resulting in under-utilisation of services. The stigma associated with mental disorders is another major barrier. For those who do seek professional help there is a scarcity of multilingual clinical tools and self-management resources. Recent research conducted with Arabic-speaking community members found that a Mindfulness-Based Intervention delivered in a home setting (Phase 1) and in a group setting (Phase 2) was compatible with their cultural and religious practices and reduced levels of depression, anxiety and stress. Based on these promising results, the Mindfulness group program is now being rolled out to other groups of Arabic-speakers and extended to Bengali-speakers, a new and emerging community identified as having high mental health needs and poor engagement with formal services.

The larger research translation project (Mindfulness Interventions in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities) is funded by Central and Eastern Sydney PHN. Western Sydney University has been commissioned by South Eastern Sydney Local Health District to conduct the evaluation.

The purpose of this rapid review of existing research and evidence is to support the continued evaluation of the Mindfulness group program, specifically its adaptation for and extension to the Bengali-speaking community, and publication of the evaluation results in a peer-reviewed journal.

Project Aims
The project aims to provide a timely summary of the published and grey literature relating to beliefs about mental health and mental health problems and barriers to use of mental health services among the Bengali-speaking community in Australia.

Project findings will feed directly into the larger project and may also be used inform research grant proposals.

Project Methods
Rapid reviews are literature reviews that use streamlined methods to produce a report in a shorter timeframe and using fewer resources than are usually required for a traditional systematic review.

The search, conducted by the student under supervision, will include both published and grey literature. It will be limited to Australia. Key steps include refining the research question, defining the review parameters and identifying the resulting biases, planning and executing the search, screening the search results, quality appraisal, and preparing a narrative synthesis of the included studies.

Opportunity for Skill Development
The student will develop/enhance their skills in conducting a rapid review. There is the potential to be an author on a publication.
Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply

In addition to the generic selection criteria, the student will be required to be in their final years of their undergraduate degree and be experienced in the use of databases for a literature search. They will not be expected to have conducted a systematic review, but need to be careful and thorough in their work.
Project 79: Developing a Questionnaire to Assess Health Professionals Knowledge of and Attitudes Towards Aboriginal Traditional Healing Practices and Bush Medicine

Supervisor(s): Associate Professor Ilse Blignault (Principal Supervisor)  
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Project Description
Australia's First Peoples are believed to have lived on the mainland for over 60,000 years and on the Torres Strait islands for over 10,000 years. Despite concerns that traditional healing practices would eventually disappear due to the impact of colonisation, there is evidence of their continuing use in many parts of the country. In recent times there have been increasing calls for recognition of traditional and culture-based practices as part of an integrated, two-way approach to Aboriginal health care delivery. Such an approach is in keeping with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals” (UNDRIP, 2007, art. 24.1).

The Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health commits the Commonwealth Government and all states and territories to embedding cultural respect principles into their health systems. Cultural respect is defined as: “Recognition, protection and continued advancement of the inherent rights, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people” (AHMAC, 2016, p. 1).

This project, which focuses on health professionals' knowledge and attitudes, is part of a developing program of bush medicine research inspired by Bourke Aboriginal Health Service. The discrete projects are designed to better understand the role of traditional healing practices and bush medicine in contemporary society and to contribute to the evidence base for their integration with, or use alongside, western medicine.

The student will be provided with a workspace and can gain access to the universities internet through their existing passwords. The student will be placed at the Translational Health Research Institute, Building 3 Campbelltown Campus.

Project Aims
The project aim is to develop a draft questionnaire that can be used to assess health professionals’ knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal healing practices and bush medicine and their views on such practices being integrated with, or used alongside, western medicine.

Following pilot-testing, the questionnaire will be used as a basis for surveys of different groups of health professionals including doctors, nurses and midwives and allied health professionals (psychologists, podiatrists and occupational therapists etc.).
Project Methods
The project will involve (1) formulating the questions and developing response categories (informed by a review of published and grey literature and consultations with colleagues from different health professions); (2) writing the introduction and instructions; and (3) formatting the draft questionnaire for administration (online and hard copy versions). The process will be iterative with several cycles of drafting, seeking feedback and refining.

Cultural advice and guidance will be provided by Cris Carriage (Indigenous Program Officer, SOM) and Frances (Auntie Fran) Bodkin (Dharawal Elder and Adjunct Fellow, THRI/SOM).

Opportunity for Skill Development
The student will develop/enhance their skills in conducting a literature search and developing a survey questionnaire. There is the potential to be an author on a publication.

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply
In addition to meeting the essential selection criteria for all applicants, the student will be in the final years of an undergraduate degree in medicine, health sciences, psychology or a related field. Experience in setting up an online survey is desirable but not essential. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are encouraged to apply.
Project 80: Screening for Personality Disorders Among Clients on Opioid Substitution Treatment and Impact on Functioning

Supervisor(s): Dr Elizabeth Conroy (Principal Supervisor)
Dr Kathy Watson (Second Supervisor)

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Project Description
Personality disorders are highly prevalent in people with substance use disorder compared to the general population. Among individuals with opioid dependence specifically, comorbid personality disorder has been associated with greater severity of dependence and poorer treatment outcomes. Much of the research among opioid dependent individuals has focused on Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) and Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD). For example, a large study of Australian heroin users (Australian Treatment Outcome Study – ATOS) found 46% of participants screened positive for BPD and 71% met the criteria for ASPD.

Recent debates have questioned the validity of distinct categories of personality disorder and there has been some movement away from a categorical system and toward a dimensional classification of personality dysfunction. This has been driven, in part, from the substantial comorbidity within the 10 personality disorders that suggests a high degree of symptom overlap. At the core of personality disorder is an inability to develop meaningful and satisfactory interpersonal relationships – underlying this is thought to be functional impairments related to self-system capacities. The DSM-5 Personality and Personality Disorder Work Group had proposed a revised classification based on impairments in self-functioning and interpersonal functioning along with degree of severity across five trait domains – negative affectivity, dissocial, disinhibition, anankastic and detachment.

The interplay between personality dysfunction and problematic substance use may be particularly evident in terms of the types of relationships that individuals engage in (from anti-social peers through to formal relationships with service providers) and the social capital and support that these relationships can provide. This study will compare two different screening tools for personality disorder (MacLean Scale; Standardised Assessment of Personality - Abbreviated Scale (SAPAS-SR)) alongside a social network measure and a measure of functioning. The MacLean Scale and SAPAS-SR will also serve as screening for the second stage of the research involving semi-structured in-depth interviews. Participants from Stage 1 that screen positive for a general personality disorder (SAPAS-SR) and/or BPD (McLean Scale) will be invited to participate in the Stage 2 interviews. The interviews will further explore the impact of personality symptoms on general and social functioning, particularly relationships with others including treatment providers.

Project Aims
1. To measure the social networks and level of functioning among OST clients that screen positive for general personality disorder and/or BPD compared with clients with no personality disorder.
2. To explore the impact of personality disorder symptoms on substance use, personal relationships and treatment experiences among participants that screen positive for general personality disorder and/or BPD.
Project Methods
This project is a mixed methods study of the functional impact of personality disorders among clients receiving opioid substitution therapy at Campbelltown Hospital Drug Health Service (“Coopers Cottage”). Two screening instruments will be used to assess personality disorders within the client population. A sub-group of those scoring in the clinical range on these measures will be invited to participate in a short semi-structured interview on their experiences of personality disorder symptoms in relation to their substance use, social networks and service utilisation.

The student will be responsible for data collection and thus will gain skills in the use of screening instruments to measure mental disorder and in semi-structured interviewing techniques. Training in conducting surveys and interviews with the client population will be provided by Dr Conroy at THRI. Data collection will be undertaken on-site at Coopers Cottage and overseen by Dr Kathy Watson. The student will also be involved in data entry, transcription, and data analysis (descriptive statistical analysis of survey data and descriptive thematic analysis of interview data).

Opportunity for Skill Development
The student will develop skills in:
- Ethical research involving a marginalised population
- The use of screening instruments for mental disorder
- Semi-structured interviewing techniques
- Minimisation and management of distress
- Descriptive data analysis – quantitative and qualitative

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply
- Familiarity with SPSS statistical software and basic descriptive statistics (e.g. chi square, t-tests)
- Good interpersonal skills, including the ability to develop rapport with people with substance use and other mental disorder
- Willingness to learn qualitative interviewing
- Current criminal records check and vaccinations or willingness to obtain before starting internship.
**Project 81:** Welcoming Social Wellness: Exploring the Impact of LGBTQI – Affirming Health & Community Care on Older Gender and Sexually Diverse Women’s Wellbeing and Sense of Belonging

**Supervisor(s):**
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Professor Jane Ussher (Second Supervisor)

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**Project Description**
The proposed project will investigate older (55+) gender and sexually diverse (GSD) women’s experiences with health, social and aged-care services. Given that these services, including participants’ local health centre, community social support, community mental health support, and home care (for ageing WSW), are designed to safeguard clients’ wellbeing and social connection, it is imperative to understand how Welcoming Social Wellness (WSW) interactions with these services may either support or work in direct contrast to the service’s mission.

As part of a larger project funded by the Department of Family and Community Services the summer scholar will conduct interviews with 20-30 GSD women who are 55+ to clarify their needs and perspectives. The student will collate the findings for peer-reviewed journal articles and the development of statements that GSD women across Australia can rate and rank in relation to inclusive practices of the health and social services they have accessed.

In order to complement the above qualitative findings, the student will review data collected on the project’s social media group to capture participants’ personal narratives with regards to the use of local health and social services.

Qualitative data analysis will be accomplished by looking for recursive themes or key concepts that emerge in participants’ descriptions of their experiences, looking for consistencies and patterns in this material. We will use NVivo/Quirkos to assist with the organisation of online narratives, with themes, and associated thematic-codes, derived in line with the project’s key areas of enquiry.

**Project Aims**
This project aims to:

1. Better understand the experiences of ageing gender and sexually diverse (GSD) women in relation to health, social and aged care services
2. Better understand their social connectedness and belonging within their communities connection
3. Better understand the features of LGBTIQ-friendly services these women expect, receive and/or are denied
Project Methods

The student will:

1. Conduct interviews with 20-30 GSD women who are 55+ to clarify their needs and perspectives.
2. Collate the findings for peer-reviewed journal articles
3. Develop a list of statements that GSD women across Australia can rate and rank in relation to inclusive practices of the health and social services they have accessed.
4. Review data collected on the project’s social media group to capture participants’ personal narratives with regards to the use of local health and social services.

Opportunity for Skill Development

The student will have the opportunity to develop:

- Increasing research skills: increased knowledge of online data, experience in qualitative data collection
- Increasing skills in data analysis: How to understand and interpret qualitative data
- Increasing written and oral communications: Submission of a manuscript for peer-review, with feedback on multiple drafts

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply

The nature of the project would be better suited to a 3rd Year student currently enrolled in a health, social science or psychology related degree. Applying students should have some experience in conducting literature searches and strong writing skills.

An understanding of sexuality, ageing, culture, LGBTIQ and/or disability would be an added strength.

This project carries the potential for the roll out of additional phases, including the collection of survey data. A student with a keen interest in postgraduate studies and future publications would benefit from this project, through invitation to co-author publications arising from the outcomes of this project and subsequent phase’s projects.
Project 82: A Study to Examine Association between Infant Feeding Practices and Childhood Obesity in South Western Sydney

Supervisor: Dr Haider Mannan (Principal Supervisor)

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Project Description
Preventing the onset of overweight and obesity in children is an important public health priority. Infant feeding practices are among the most identifiable factors contributing to the early onset of childhood obesity. Two longitudinal studies and two systematic reviews of breastfeeding and childhood overweight and obesity conclude that breastfeeding is protective against overweight (Grummer-Strawn and Mei 2011) and obesity (Beyerlein and von Kries 2011; Arenz et al. 2004; Armstrong and Reilly 2002), with some studies showing a dose response relationship. There is also a growing body of evidence linking the early introduction of solids to the risk of obesity (Toschke et al 2007; Baker et al 2004; Grummer-Strawn and Mei 2004). The UK Millennium Cohort Study with more than 10,000 children, found that when solids were introduced before four months, children were more likely to be overweight or obese at three and five years of age compared to babies given solid foods after four months (Griffiths et al 2009).

In South West Sydney, a randomised trial known as the Healthy Beginnings Trial, found that out of the 96% mothers initiating breastfeeding as high as 58% did not continue breastfeeding up to 6 months and hence did not meet the WHO recommended guidelines for breastfeeding. So, breastfeeding is an issue of public health concern. One in 10 children, or more than 20,000 children between age 2 and 17, are battling obesity in the South Western Sydney Local Health District which is the highest in Australia (Buckley 2017). Among the developed nations, rates of childhood obesity in Australia are one of the highest with approximately 20% of children at 2–3 years of age being overweight or obese (Wolfenden et al. 2011). The present study aims to assess the association between infant feeding patterns and childhood obesity in South Western Sydney.

Project Aims
- The study aims to assess the association between exclusive breastfeeding and childhood obesity in South Western Sydney.
- The study aims to assess the association between age at onset of solid supplementation and childhood obesity in South Western Sydney.

Project Methods
The study will adopt a repetitive cross-sectional study design using a series of New South Wales Child Health Surveys (see link: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/surveys/Pages/nsw-population-health-survey.aspx). The New South Wales Population Health Survey is an ongoing telephone survey of state residents that is one of the main mechanisms through which NSW Health monitors population health and reports on performance indicators. Its objectives are to monitor changes over time in self-reported health behaviours, health status, health service use, satisfaction with health services, and other factors that influence health; support the planning, implementation, and evaluation of health services; collect health information that is not available from other sources; respond quickly to emerging needs for health information; and promote research. Statistical analyses include descriptive statistical analysis and multiple logistic regression analysis.
Opportunity for Skill Development
The student is expected to learn how to perform basic literature search. The student, after completion of the project is expected to learn descriptive and basic analytical epidemiology, basic biostatistics and basic public health policy if required.

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply
A final year undergraduate student is preferred. The student is required to have knowledge of basic epidemiology and population health and some knowledge of biostatistics.
Project 83: Development and Brief Validation of a Population Based Survey to Examine Obese Individuals Barriers to Cancer Screening

**Supervisor(s):**
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Dr Freya MacMillan (Second Supervisor)

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**Project Description**
Our team has been conducting research among obese women in Western Sydney (in partnership with Wentwest PHN) to explore possible barriers and facilitators to participation in routine breast screening. These data indicate that there are a number of issues around routine cancer screening among these women that are either preventing them from attending breast screening at all or that they are lapsing in their attendance. We would now like to expand this research into its second phase, where a population based survey is developed to examine these issues across a broader population.

A survey needs to be developed and validated (to ensure robustness of the data collected using the survey). This development and validation process will be the focus of the summer scholarship, with potential for the student to be involved in the subsequent roll out of the survey. Data from this survey will provide additional pilot data in support of the development of a grant proposal in 2018, where funding will be sought to develop a pilot 'peer encourager' project to increase breast screening rates.

**Project Aims**
- Brief literature review to establish if existing questionnaires are available that can be adapted for the project
- Development of an online survey to assess obese individual's barriers to cancer screening
- Brief validation of the online survey

**Project Methods**
Using exploratory data already collected by the research team, the student will firstly be responsible for conducting a search using online databases to source and existing tools that are being used to assess obese individual's barriers to cancer screening. The student will then be responsible for developing a population based online survey for use with individuals residing in Australia. The survey items will be informed by both the literature search and the exploratory research already conducted. Once the survey has been developed, the student will conduct a brief validation process using mixed methods.

First, to establish content validity, or content representativeness and relevance of the survey, the student will seek input from key stakeholders as well as content experts in cancer screening and/or obesity. These experts will be asked to review the questionnaire and rate each question for suitability/usefulness as well as make any recommendations for change. The student will collate these responses and conduct simple statistical analyses to assess this element of content validity. The student will then conduct cognitive interviewing among a small sample of participants to assess understanding and readability of the survey in the target audience. After identifying survey modification needs following content validation, the student will focus on determining reliability of the survey using a test–retest methodology.
Opportunity for Skill Development
The student will have the opportunity to learn and develop skills in a number of research skill areas:

- Literature searching
- Survey development
- Mixed methods approach to survey validation and reliability processes
- Qualitative interviewing
- Simple statistical analyses
- Collaboration with external partners
- Report and journal article writing.
- Working as part of a research team

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply
Students are expected to have basic knowledge in use of Microsoft office and preferably have an interest in non-communicable disease prevention and/or cancer screening. Their communication skills should be of high quality and they should be confident in engaging with individuals outside of the university.