



Translational Health

SUITABLE FOR MASTER OF RESEARCH

N/A - Visit our [find a supervisor page](#) for further advice.

SUITABLE FOR MASTER OF RESEARCH OR PHD

Ageing Male Australian Prisoners

Dr Nicole Peel: n.peel@westernsydney.edu.au

Supported by: Associate Professor Arianne Reis

Research area: Health, Wellbeing, Minority/marginalised populations, Older adults, Male gender

The prison population in Australia is both increasing and ageing; between 2009 and 2019 it increased overall by 32%, with an increase of 79% of prisoners aged 45 or older (AIHW, 2020b). Accelerated ageing due to the prison environment and the poorer health of those entering the prison system (Watson, Stimpson, & Hostick, 2004) means that those aged 45 are categorised as older prisoners in Australia (AIHW, 2020a) and elsewhere (Canada, Barrenger, Robinson, Washington, & Mills, 2020). Older prisoners generally have worse physical and mental health than younger prisoners (AIHW, 2020a), with older prisoners significantly more likely than younger prisoners to have been diagnosed with chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, arthritis and diabetes (AIHW, 2020a). Older prisoners are also more likely than younger prisoners to report poor mental health despite being less likely to have been diagnosed with a mental health problem (AIHW, 2020a).

This project could accommodate two students, one who is keen to undertake a systematic review and the other who would like to assist with the program implementation at Long Bay Prison.

BreastScreen+

Dr Kate McBride: k.mcbride@westernsydney.edu.au



Research area: Cancer screening, Female gender, Obesity

Eight breast cancer deaths are prevented for every 1,000 women aged 50-74 years who undergo biennial mammographic screening. Despite demonstrated benefits of screening, ~40% women attending screening for the first or second time fail to return for screening when next due leading to a need for interventions to retain women in the program. It is well established women with obesity are at increased risk of non-participation in breast screening. As obesity is linked to poorer prognoses and lower breast cancer survival rates, improving rescreening rates within women with obesity is vital. This project will evaluate a novel intervention to improve the screening experience for both obese women and radiographers to increase rescreening participation in obese women. A co-design approach will be developed to deliver:

- Practical and empathy training for BreastScreen service delivery staff to optimise their management of obese women
- Information for BreastScreen clients about mammography including visual images to normalise body sizes

Rescreening rates and survey responses (from clients and service delivery staff) will then be evaluated to assess satisfaction of the mammogram experience.

Comorbidity of Gambling Studies (COGS)

Dr Elizabeth Conroy: e.conroy@westernsydney.edu.au

Research area: Health, Wellbeing, Migrant populations, Substance using population

Problem gambling is highly comorbid with substance use disorder and other mental health problems, and associated with significant financial stress, disruption to social roles, and relationship breakdown. People with gambling problems tend to delay seeking treatment and are more likely to first seek help for other health problems. This suggests a need for improved detection of problem gambling across health care settings. COGS is a partnership with Drug Health Services in SWSLHD to document the prevalence and correlates of problem gambling among different patient groups and co-design appropriate assessment and referral pathways to ensure the early identification and management of gambling comorbidity. The study could support both masters and PhD projects.



Dementia-Friendly South West Sydney

Dr Diana Karamacoska: d.karamacoska@westernsydney.edu.au

Research area: Health, Wellbeing, Dementia, Older adults, Culturally diverse communities, Linguistically diverse communities

People affected by dementia, especially those from culturally diverse backgrounds, are experiencing isolation throughout South West Sydney. This is due to stigma and low awareness about dementia within the community. This project aims to overcome these issues by co-designing, implementing, and evaluating multilingual dementia education and intervention programs together with local governments, service providers, and community members. Using mixed methods research, we will identify knowledge gaps and needs, create interventions to address these, and evaluate their impact. We are seeking students with experience or passion for dementia advocacy to join our multidisciplinary team on this innovative initiative. This project will build on skills needed for program planning for evidence-based strategies, implementation, and evaluation; partnership building; and communication.

Diabetes Prevention and Management Community-based Programs

Associate Professor Freya MacMillan: f.macmillan@westernsydney.edu.au

Research area: Diabetes prevention, Culturally diverse communities, Linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal communities, Rural and remote communities

Within the Diabetes, Obesity, Metabolism and Translational Research Unit (DOMTRU), A/Prof MacMillan leads the development and oversees the implementation of community-based approaches to prevent diabetes and its complications. Projects include working with those inequitably affected by diabetes. This includes culturally and linguistically diverse communities, such as Pasifika and Indigenous communities, women with diabetes planning pregnancy and those living in inner-regional areas. Her programs are co-created with community and other stakeholders involved in their delivery, and focus on up-skilling community members to provide sustainable approaches. Peer support is at the core of the programs she develops, where capacity is built within volunteer community members to deliver peer lifestyle behaviour and diabetes management support to their community peers. She collaborates with several external organisations within health and across other sectors to deliver programs in partnership.



Diverse Women's and Transgender Peoples' Experiences of Hysterectomy

Associate Professor Alison Downham Moore:

alison.moore@westernsydney.edu.au

Research area: Health, Wellbeing, Minority/marginalised populations, Older adults, Women, Transgender people

This interdisciplinary project works between the medical humanities and health sciences, with supervision provided by scholars in each: A/Prof Alison Downham Moore (medical humanities) and A/Prof Tinashe Dune (health sciences).

The project entails

1. Analysing existing first-person writings and representations (published books or essays, blogs, podcasts, discussion-board contributions, art-works) by diverse women and transgender people who have undergone hysterectomy (with or without oophorectomy), considering their reported experiences of medical care, post-surgical recovery and long-term holistic well-being. It may also involve the use of critical frames derived from philosophy, gender studies, trans studies, Indigenous studies, health sociology, medical anthropology or cultural studies.
2. Interviewing people who have undergone such surgeries, either recently, or long in the past, about their experiences of medical care, post-surgical recovery and long-term holistic well-being.

The HDR project will relate to the larger project of A/Profs Moore and Dune, with ANU anthropologist Fouzieyha Towghi, entitled, Gynaecological Surgeries, A History of the Present. There will also be opportunities to participate in a video podcast series, co-authored publications, and workshops organised as part of this larger project between 2023-2025.

Establishing Canterbury-Bankstown as a Dementia-Friendly Community

Dr Diana Karamacoska: d.karamacoska@westernsydney.edu.au

Research area: Health, Wellbeing, Dementia, Older adults, Culturally diverse communities, Linguistically diverse communities

Canterbury-Bankstown has more than 8,000 residents living with dementia and this figure is expected to double within the next 30 years. Dementia is an



incurable and terminal condition with disabilities that are exacerbated by socially and physically unsupportive environments. To overcome these issues, researchers formed an alliance with representatives from the Council, service providers, and dementia care groups. Together, we are designing and delivering community-based education interventions to combat stigma and promote healthier living. As more than 60% of the region's population speaks a language other than English, we are creating multilingual programs for the linguistically diverse communities. Motivated students, with experience or passion in dementia advocacy, are encouraged to join our multidisciplinary team to carry out research evaluating the development and implementation of evidence-based programs. This will involve reviewing relevant literature and analysing the data collected from various communities to identify education priorities and strategies for optimal program delivery.

Evaluating the Process and Impact of a Multilingual Dementia Education Program

Dr Diana Karamacoska: d.karamacoska@westernsydney.edu.au

Research area: Health, Wellbeing, Dementia literacy, Culturally diverse communities, Linguistically diverse communities

Low dementia literacy and stigma remains prevalent in culturally and linguistically diverse communities, perpetuating barriers to social participation and help-seeking among people affected by dementia. To date, there has been limited application of dementia friendly education initiatives in multicultural settings. To fill this gap, our project will co-design and pilot-test an online multilingual dementia education session for the public. This study is being conducted in Canterbury-Bankstown where English, Arabic, and Vietnamese are commonly spoken. Researchers will co-design a single education session, based on the Dementia Friends program, with the local dementia alliance. This project will therefore evaluate the process and impact of this dementia education program using mixed methods research (qualitative and quantitative methods). The student will work alongside an interdisciplinary team of researchers, council officers, and service providers. Having experience or passion for dementia and advocacy work is desirable.

Homecare for Older Australians: What's it really like?

Associate Professor Ann Dadich: A.Dadich@westernsydney.edu.au



Research area: Health, Wellbeing, Older Australians, Homecare

This project will clarify the experiences of older Australians who require homecare, their carers, and the service providers who support them. This will be achieved by:

- Inviting older Australians who require homecare, carers, and service providers to share their stories of receiving or delivering homecare
- Analysing the qualitative data to construct narratives
- Clarifying what helps and hinders personal and social wellbeing among older Australians who require homecare
- Determining the associated theoretical and practical implications

This project is important because:

- The need for homecare is on the rise, nationally and internationally
- Of the limited scholarship on homecare, very little is about the experiences of receiving and delivering homecare
- Given the dearth of scholarship, there is limited understanding of how to promote personal and social wellbeing among older Australians who require homecare

Living large: Enhancing Transition from Tertiary Obesity Services to Community-based Care for Adults with Obesity

Dr Kate McBride: k.mcbride@westernsydney.edu.au

Research area: Health, Wellbeing, Obesity

Obesity is a national health priority that affects 31% of Australians. Obesity is a complex condition that significantly increases risk of chronic disease, is associated with higher mortality and affects quality of life and social wellbeing. In response to the increasing rates of clinically severe obesity, obesity clinics have been established support individuals to achieve better outcomes when faced with the challenges of obesity. However once patients are out of the acute treatment phase for their obesity, they must be transitioned from the clinic due to limited service capacity. Integrated and supportive primary care services are essential to help those individuals during transition to negotiate any challenges & maintain positive changes achieved. This study will use a co-design approach with consumers to develop, implement and evaluate an integrated care intervention (including social support structures) to improve community care for individuals with obesity.



Longitudinal Health and Wellbeing of Foster Carers

Dr Nicole Peel: n.peel@westernsydney.edu.au

Supported by: Associate Professor Stacy Blythe

Research area: Health, Wellbeing, Foster carers, Males, Females, LGBTQI adults, Rural and remote communities, Culturally diverse communities, Linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal people, Marginalised populations

This project will give voice to foster carers and provide insight into their experiences thereby empowering carers to inform policy and practice development that will better support them in their care-giving role, ultimately resulting in better child outcomes and decreased carer attrition. To date the majority of longitudinal OOHC studies focus on the children in care rather than the carer. Carers have a weighty responsibility as many of these children experience significant emotional, behavioural and developmental issues. In their caregiving capacity, these carers are a key determinant of child outcomes. Although guided by a national framework, individual states/territories have statutory responsibility for OOHC. As such, most Australian based research (which is minimal) is limited in its generalisability. This project will enable access to a national sample of carers and facilitate comparisons between jurisdictions that support development of effective social policy and practice.

This project can support a student who is keen to complete a systematic literature review or be involved in a data collection project. This is a longer-term project with many different arms and may be able to accommodate students' interests in foster carers.

Positive Experiences of Adults

Dr Nicole Peel: n.peel@westernsydney.edu.au

Supported by: Associate Professor Stacy Blythe

Research area: Health, Wellbeing, Males, Females, LGBTQI adults, Rural and remote communities, Culturally diverse communities, Linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal people, Marginalised populations

There is growing evidence that positive childhood life experiences can help overcome adverse childhood experience. Despite this evidence there is very little



work being undertaken to capture these positive experiences in Australia. This project will identify a survey tool that can be used to capture data from Australian adults of those experiences. The project can accommodate more than one student with a systematic literature review and a data collection project.

Understanding Therapy

Dr Nicole Peel: n.peel@westernsydney.edu.au

Supported by: Nikki Tullani

Research area: Health, Wellbeing, Rural and remote communities, Culturally linguistically diverse, Linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal people, Marginalised populations

Many therapies operate within settings servicing marginalised individuals such as recreational therapy, art therapy, music therapy, dance therapy, speech therapy, podiatry, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and psychological services (Australian quality of care standards, 2014). There is an inconsistency in the use of therapies across services and individuals. It may be that some of these therapies overlap. The Royal Commission in Aged Care has suggested an increase in allied health services should be made available within aged care settings (Commonwealth of Australia, 2021). To meet the growing population of individuals in any setting and the endless possibility of therapies available it is important to understand what options already exist and the outcomes they aim to meet. This project is a large project encompassing many settings and can be accommodated to meet a students needs.

This project can accommodate students for a small project such as a Masters program or a student who would be interested in completing a PhD. It can include a systematic review of literature, a hands-on implementation project or data collection.

SUITABLE FOR PHD

A Place to Call Home? An Explication of Tent City Residents' Experiences

Associate Professor Ann Dadich: A.Dadich@westernsydney.edu.au

Research area: Health, Wellbeing, People who reside(d) in a tent city



This project will clarify the lived experiences of tent city residents, particularly local efforts to disestablish tent cities. This will be achieved by:

- Inviting people who currently or previously resided in a tent city to share stories of residing in a tent city and with local efforts to disestablish the tent city
- Analysing the qualitative data to construct narratives
- Clarifying what helps and hinders personal and social wellbeing among tent city residents
- Determining the associated theoretical and practical implications

This project is important because:

- Tent cities are on the rise, nationally and internationally – thus, more people are affected by them, directly and/or indirectly
- Of the limited scholarship on tent cities, very little is known about tent city residents – thus, their voices are relatively absent within homelessness discourse
- Given the dearth of scholarship, there is limited understanding of how to promote personal and social wellbeing among tent city residents

Biological Markers for Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders

Professor Vlasios Brakoulias: Vlasios.brakoulias@health.nsw.gov.au

Research area: Mental health, Wellbeing, Biological markers, Clinical studies

This project aims to investigate biological markers for obsessive-compulsive and related disorders by collaborating with biomedical engineers, neurophysiologists and by collecting data on heart rate variability, electroencephalography, family history, response to pharmacotherapy and other available biological markers.

The project will build on existing clinical data and will continue to have a clinical focus.

It is hoped that results will find predictors of response to pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy and/or course of the disorder.

Relationship Between Emotion and Walking Posture

Professor Roy Cheung: Roy.Cheung@westernsydney.edu.au



Research area: Health, Wellbeing, Adolescents, Young adults, Older adults

This project aims to investigate the relationship between walking posture and different emotions, such as anxiety, depression and volition, in 3 groups of participants (i.e., adolescents, younger adults and older adults). To minimise Hawthorne effect and promote natural gait biomechanics, we will employ [markerless motion capturing technology](#) to measure 3-dimensional walking kinematics and assess emotion using validated instruments and questionnaire. We will use principal component analysis to map the specific feature(s) related to specific emotion. In addition, the participants will be reassessed such that we can understand how emotion impacts on individual's gait pattern and variability between participants. This study is expected to build the foundation for the development of a real-time mood monitoring system for clinical use.

Success Stories in Reconciling Homosexuality and Religiosity

Associate Professor Brahm Marjadi: b.marjadi@westernsydney.edu.au

Research area: Mental health, Wellbeing, Homosexuality, Religiosity

Most research that reports on the intersection between homosexuality and religiosity portray a negative and bleak picture where religion is seen as incompatible or deleterious for the wellbeing of homosexual people. Many homosexual persons who grew up with strong religious background face a difficult choice between their homosexuality and religiosity. Since both features are essential to one's identity, giving up one for the other often leads to unhappiness and a sense of loss. However, there is strong anecdotal evidence on how some people manage to reconcile their homosexuality and religiosity. These success stories need to be explored and published to offer hope especially for young people and to shift the paradigm for this intersection from the negative "or" to a positive and affirming "and" paradigm: that people can be both homosexual and stay within their religious beliefs.
