

Townsville Hospital and Health Service

Research Annual Report





Townsville Hospital and Health Service Research Annual Report 2024 Published by the State of Queensland (Townsville Hospital and Health Service), July 2025

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Message from the Health Service Chief Executive

It is my pleasure to contribute this message to the 2024 Townsville Institute of Health Research and Innovation (TIHRI) Annual Report.

The sheer volume of research activities undertaken last year – more than 250 peer-reviewed publications, more than 80 ethics applications, and more than 700 active researchers in our health service – speaks to our vibrant, exciting research culture.

Last year we approved more than \$1 million in Study Education Research Trust Account grants to courageous and curious researchers from across our patch. These included grants for developing a screening tool for obstructive sleep apnoea, establishing a skin cancer biobank, and investigating post-surgical outcomes for First Nations patients with rheumatic heart disease.

During 2024, TIHRI, based at Townsville University Hospital, continued to lead the way in both health research in north Queensland and as a collaborative hub for local delivery of national and international clinical trials with almost 100 new clinical trials registered.

Local researchers continued to attract grant monies from prestigious expert bodies including the Emergency Medicine Foundation, Queensland Technology Fund, and National Health and Medical Research Council. These grants are highly competitive, and the success of our researchers is testament to the strength, ingenuity, and bravery of their applications.

Excitingly, we are more and more embedding consumers in research as co-researchers and co-collaborators including in research projects in emergency medicine and pressure injury prevention.

My thanks and congratulations go to TIHRI Director Professor Andrew Mallett, an eminent researcher himself with a major grant from the Office of Research and Innovation for genomic exploration for navigating end-stage kidney disease, and his team for the passion and energy they bring to research in our health service.

Research is about pushing boundaries, challenging the status quo, and, often, finding the courage to begin.

As the late, great American astronomer Carl Sagin told us 'Something incredible is waiting to be known'.

Professor Kieran Keyes

Health Service Chief Executive Townsville Hospital and Health Service



Message from the Executive Director of Clinical Governance and Director of Clinical Research

It is a pleasure and joy for us to provide this foreword and introduction to the 2024 Townsville Hospital and Health Service Research Annual Report. With so many research activities taking place throughout the hospital and health service, it is an opportune time to celebrate and reflect upon them. The ongoing delivery and commencement of activities aligned to our Research Strategic Plan is also a testament to the renewed strategic vision for how research can meaningfully translate into the exceptional care provided every day.

Whilst again, the functioning of the Townsville Institute of Health Research and Innovation has remained outstanding with yet again region and state leading performance across many research support, facilitation and management metrics, it is important to redouble efforts to focus on how research activities translate into practice. This has many examples such as supporting existing policy and practice or supporting implementation of new policy or practice. Further, it can also support disinvestment in activities that are either low-value or no longer required. This year much time and effort has been expended in identifying ways in which this often qualitatively measured phenomena of research translation can be reflected and framed in the often quantitative world of research reporting. We are looking forward to sharing this through the coming years and it is a privilege this year to see the beginnings of this reflected throughout the Annual Research Report.

The delivery of a broad and deep portfolio of clinical trials across Townsville Hospital and Health Service has continued to grow through 2024. In many ways, our hospital and health service is demonstrating how sustainable growth and success can be delivered in this space through internal and external partnership in concert with robust and transparent governance and a shared vision for patient-centred success. These same principles have supported the active and

thoughtful implementation of alignment to the National Clinical Trials Framework. The methodical partnership shown by multiple groups and teams across the health service to deliver this complex but important activity has been nothing short of remarkable. Full implementation remains on track for delivery well ahead of requirements, much to the benefit of staff, patients and trial sponsors alike.

The portfolio of partnerships being forged in the research space continues to grow, from high level strategic partnerships such as the Queensland Digital Health Centre through to a clear and growing proportion of research products involving collaboration nationally and internationally. The TropiQ Townsville Research Symposium has this year again served to highlight the high calibre of local research activities whilst bringing together colleagues from across the campus and region to connect and collaborate.

This year the digital health research landscape at Townsville Hospital and Health Service has continued to grow and develop, with this now being seen as an industry-leading function that is enabling direct and meaningful benefits from the digital health systems we use for clinical care every day. In 2025, we look forward to further supporting extension of these supports to all parts of the hospital and health service with completion of the integrated electronic medical record rollout to rural facilities. The unique nature of our health service in company with strategic focus on partnership and digital health research places us in an excellent position to support an equitable learning health system model for translation research.

Thank you to all staff and collaborators who have made 2024 an immense success for research across Townsville Hospital and Health Service. The coming years are looking brighter than ever before.

Marina Daly

Executive Director Clinical Governance

Professor Andrew Mallett

Director of Clinical Research

2024 Research Highlights

266

Peer reviewed publications

Active registered clinical trials



Field Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) for THHS publications

1.21

(21% higher than the global average)



730

Active research projects

96

New projects authorized



Active (publishing) researchers

124

Funding awarded from external grants in 2024 (on which THHS staff were named investigators)

\$3,822,510

Total active grant funds

(grants received in, and prior to, 2024 on which THHS staff were named investigators)

\$74,773,908

Funding awarded internally through THHS SERTA grants in 2024

\$1,478,480



33

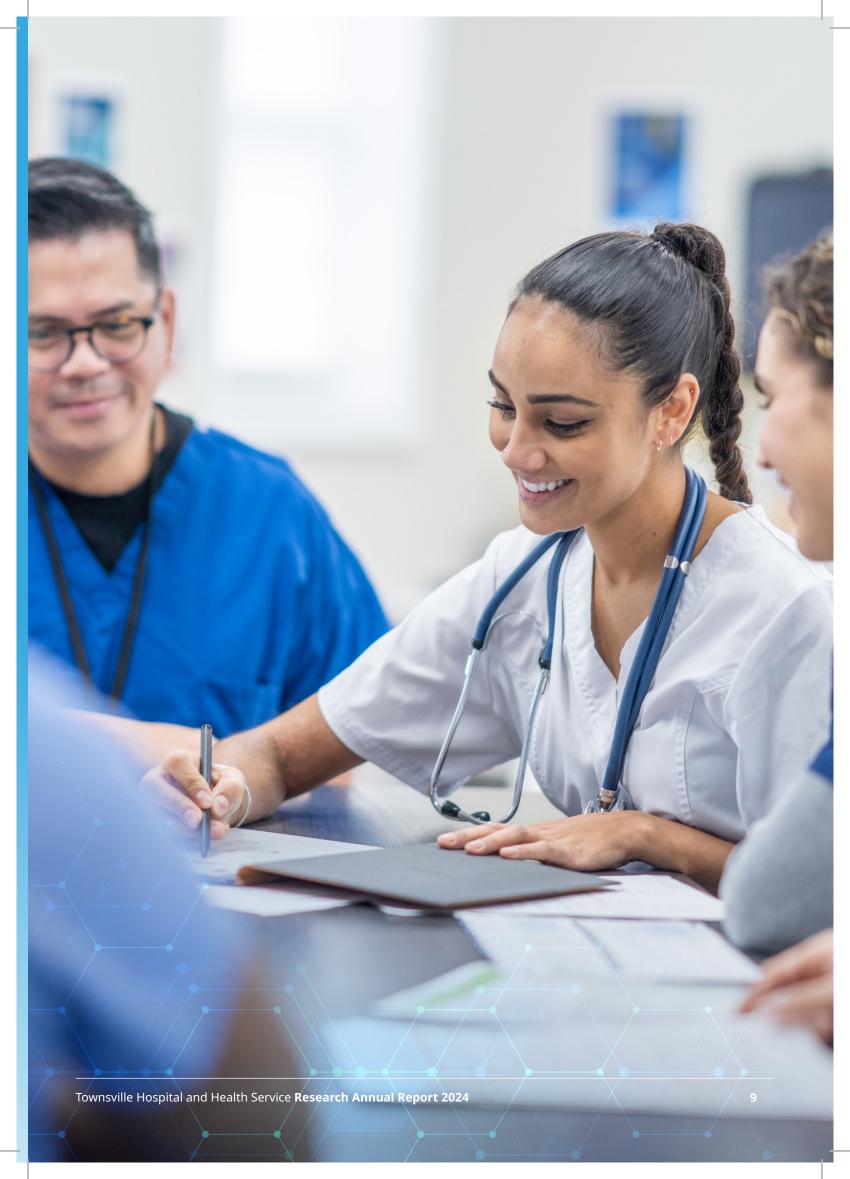
Research education and training sessions delivered

Ethics applications reviewed

144



Audit, Quality and Innovation Review (AQUIRE) process applications reviewed



2024 TropiQ Research Symposium

The 2024 Townsville TropiQ Research Symposium was held on 1st October and showcased research excellence, innovation and translation from across our region.

Plenary presentations were delivered by two eminent Queensland researchers:



Professor Clair Sullivan, Director of The University of Queensland's Digital Health Centre and Consultant Endocrinologist for Metro North Hospital and Health Service. Professor Sullivan is an internationally recognised practising and academic clinical informatician who is at the forefront of driving digital health transformation in Queensland.

In her presentation "The typing is on the wall" Professor Sullivan discussed the massive growth in data that healthcare has experienced over recent decades and the challenges that healthcare professionals face in staying abreast of information relevant to their roles and the conditions of their patients. Covering topics spanning funding models, the transformational change that data and digital technology is bringing to the sector, and the desire to concurrently improve clinician wellbeing, patient experience, healthcare costs and health outcomes, Professor Sullivan posited that transformational change driven by data and digital technology is inevitable. Our challenge is to ensure that health professionals embrace it, engage with training and education to develop their technical skills, while ensuring that the essential human attributes that make a great clinician, wisdom, warmth and kindness, continue to be valued and demonstrated.



Professor Paul Scuffham, Professor of Health Economics at Griffith University and Fellow and Board member of the Australian Academy of health and Medical Sciences.

Professor Scuffham's presentation explored the question "Does investing in new technologies create better patient outcomes?". Reflecting on recent global unrest which has fuelled global economic uncertainty and led to reduced investment and motivations by governments to reduce healthcare spending, Professor Scuffham explored the drivers of health spending in Australia. He touched on our changing demographics, including the ageing population, and the pressures of growing demand for health workforce that will be required to care for Australians in the future that is outstripping our current capacity to train, and recognised that improving efficiency of the health system is going to be essential to delivering effective healthcare. Professor Scuffham acknowledged the key role that clinician researchers and adoption of new technologies play in driving innovation, and the complexity associated with determining the value for money, the cost and effectiveness, between healthcare interventions including more-recently AI and digital interventions.

In addition to the two keynote speakers, the day heard presentations from 15 local researchers.

Moving ahead with the times: Cardiac nurses' and patients' perceptions of electronic medical records.
5
Dual-energy CT surveillance for radiation dose reduction after endovascular aortic aneurysm repair: a systematic review and meta-analysis
Drivers of low-value diagnostic tests in Emergency Medicine practice at Townsville University Hospital
The microbial diversity and antimicrobial susceptibility underlying diabetic foot osteomyelitis in North Queensland - A retrospective study
A clinical audit of adverse post-nephrectomy outcomes in renal cell carcinoma patients at Townsville University Hospital
How Much Data Do You Need? Automatic MRI Delineation of Multiple Pelvic Organs using A.I in a Limited Dataset Context
Can ICD-10 Z codes be used as proxy measures for ACE categories? - a proof of concept
Design, Development and Evaluation of a Mindfulness-Based CBT Mobile App for Paternal Perinatal Mental Health: Results from a Randomised Controlled Trial
A Step Ahead in Remote and Rural Queensland: A Novel Approach to High-Risk Foot Care in Hard-to-Reach Locations
Qualifying the severity of rheumatic heart disease and its management in the North Queensland catchment, 2018-2023; where can we improve?
Implementation and Impact of a Dietetic Model of Care in the ICU: A Mixed-Methods Evaluation
Measuring the clinical impact of research growth in a public health service organisation
Ventriculo-arterial (VA) coupling and fQRS as new selection criteria for primary prevention ICD implantation
Hughenden Place-Based Health Planning
Aeromedical Retrieval of People with Acute Behavioural Disturbance - ELEVATE Study
S C TO AL HE O C F AL OC I N N N H



Best Poster: Ms Samantha Barber - for her poster entitled: An Exploratory Study: The Presence of Imposter Syndrome in New Graduate Allied Health Professionals and its Relationship to Location of Practice (Barber S, Flavell, C, Smith M); and



Best Oral Presentation Nandini Kulasegaran – for her presentation 'The microbial diversity and antimicrobial susceptibility underlying diabetic foot osteomyelitis in North Queensland - A retrospective study'.



Research Translation Challenge

The 2024 Symposium again included the popular Shark Tank session in which staff were invited to pitch to a panel of judges their ideas for translational projects that could lead to improved health outcomes for individuals, communities, and the functioning of the health system.

Presentations included:

Team Members		Project
Rebecca Tapiolas		Physiotherapy Exercise Group for Postpartum Women
Farah Aga Andrew Livingstone		Prevalence of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea in a Regional Psychiatric Rehabilitation Unit: A Cross Sectional Cohort Study
Alisha Dicton Tayla Dundas Chloe Austin Emma Brown	Fiona Tambling Alex Stephens Kate Lovell Dan Langridge	The Aphasia Friendly Menu: Bridging Communication Gaps in Patient Dining
Jade Jewell Rachel McMahon Tayla Dundus Kayla Stridrion	Ruby Sharp Natalie Thuis Spohie Deeth Felicity Dick	Shining a light on hospital mealtimes – how dietitians can provide better value care
Sarah Deacon Courtney Fisher Amy Brown		Heads Up: A digital solution to helping patients manage the demands of head and neck cancer treatment
Ife Tokun Nerida Caden Henry Wang Trent Johnston Leigh Ryan	Christine Hobbs Jacqueline Harbor Ian Anderson Teresa Matai Yechan Park	Podiatry AHA led renal foot screening – a pilot



Health Service Chief Executive, Prof Kieran Keyes experiencing how challenging it can be for patients to select meals in the hospital setting.



Rebecca Tapiolas (right) and colleagues demonstrating the types of exercise that they propose be available to postpartum women.



Speech Pathologists, Emma Brown and Alisha Dicton - The Aphasia Friendly Menu

The Aphasia Friendly Menu project team was awarded an 18-month tailored package of support and mentorship in research translation methods from our partner, the Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre (TAAHC).



Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre



Kaye Hewson, Director, Australian Teletrial Program, Professor Paul Scuffham, Professor Clair Sullivan, and Professor Andrew Mallett

2023 Shark Tank Project Update

In the inaugural Shark Tank session in 2023 a total of eight projects were pitched to the judges. At the 2024 Symposium a summary of the progress of these projects was provided, with all projects having progressed positively over the past year, and a total of >\$282,000 in additional funding secured by the project teams, leveraging the \$24,000 in grants that were awarded through the 2023 Shark Tank Challenge.

One of the winning projects from 2023, the HOPE (Helping Our Patients Eat) project has already shown positive impact on improving patient health and engaging with community volunteers.

Helping Our Patients Eat (HOPE): Impact of a volunteer mealtime assistance program

Approximately 30% of inpatients in Australian hospitals are malnourished, with older people (aged 65 years and older) presenting a greater risk. Malnutrition risk factors typically increase with age and include physical changes associated with ageing, increased burden of chronic disease, and sensory and cognitive impairment.

In Townsville, the 2022 annual malnutrition audit found 24% of inpatients were malnourished, with rates for older people (32%) almost double that of people aged under 65 years (17%). The issue persists locally with malnutrition prevalence among older inpatients admitted to the Townsville University Hospital increasing by 7% over the last 3 years. Patients who eat poorly are at greater risk of developing hospital associated complications including malnutrition, falls, pressure injuries and delirium. Such complications substantially increase length of hospital stay, admission cost, unplanned readmissions and the risk of mortality in hospital.

Data from the 2023 THHS audit of the ward-based delirium prevention program Eat Walk Engage identified that 50% of patients who required assistance with their meals did not receive this in a timely manner. The Helping Our Patients Eat (HOPE) program, led by dietitian Felicity Dick, was developed specifically to address this need and improve patient meal access. Initially starting as an idea in a casual conversation between colleagues supporting research translation, HOPE has fast evolved into a highly valued program showcasing the value of multidisciplinary and volunteer collaboration.

The HOPE project team includes representatives from dietetics, occupational therapy, speech pathology, nursing, Eat Walk Engage and volunteers from THHS's charity partner Brighter Lives, with mentorship and project funding via the THHS Research Symposium Shark Tank and Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre (TAAHC). The multi-disciplinary team were guided by evidence, including a 2017 meta-analysis on mealtime interventions that found statistically significant increases in energy and protein intake from the use of mealtime assistance programs. The literature recognises the increasingly important role that trained volunteers are playing in supporting patient mealtimes including improving meal access, load sharing with nursing staff, and increasingly social support for patients.

During 2024 the HOPE team trained eleven Brighter Lives volunteers who were tasked with supporting

mealtimes for some of the health service's most vulnerable patients on Surgical Wards 1 and 2 up to 5 days a week at lunchtime. While volunteers do not feed patients, perform any manual handling tasks, or assist infectious patients, they offer important assistance in terms of meal set-up, including ensuring tray tables are within reach and tidy, packets are open, food is cut up if necessary, hot drinks are replenished and patients are encouraged to eat. Operating through an opt-out referral system, the volunteer team supports an average of 75% of patients during any given shift.

Patients, staff, and volunteers are all benefiting from the project. At six months post implementation mealtime audits have shown significant improvements in tray tables being within patient reach and access to timely mealtime set-up assistance, and clinically relevant improvements in food intake amongst patients. Ward staff are valuing the consistent messaging to patients on the importance of eating, and the presence and rapport-building that volunteers bring to the ward environment. Volunteers have found the opportunity to interact with, and support patients, extremely rewarding, seeing firsthand the impact that it has on patients. As Brighter Lives volunteer Mitch Mee noted "You're seeing instant satisfaction with the patient, that interaction that we've got going with them, and you can see you're helping somebody".

The project has already been recognised both locally and statewide, winning the 2024 THHS Allied Health Award for Enhancing Patient Outcomes, and shortlisted as a finalist at the Queensland statewide Allied Health – Translating Research into Practice (AH-TRIP) showcase. The project team is continuing to track its impact in improving patient nutrition and mealtime experience, and is working to support further rollout of the project to other wards across the HHS.



2024 Research Excellence Awards

The 2024 Research Excellence Awards were presented by THHS Board members Michelle Morton and Nicole Hayes at the Symposium dinner following the TropIQ Research Symposium.

Award recipients included:

Researcher of the Year



Professor Andrew Mallett

Research Group of the Year



Courtney West and Vinay Gangathimmaiah

Research Support Award

Leanne Griffiths



External Grants

THHS staff were investigators on a number of prestigious external grants awarded in 2024 including:

THHS Principal Investigator	Service Group	Funding Body	Grant/Project Title	Awarded (\$)
Dr Vinay Gangathimmaiah	Medical	EMF (Emergency Medicine Foundation)	QuED HEAT: Queensland Emergency Departments: exploring the impact of Heatwave Exposure And Temperature	\$44,201
Ms Carly Hislop	Women's and Children's	NHMRC (National Health & Medical Research Council)	The Tracking Cube: Improving Health Equity by Screening for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in primary healthcare	\$1,499,292
Dr Adam Holyoak	Medical	EMF (Emergency Medicine Foundation)	Efficacy of pressure pad vs pressure bandage immobilisation for snake bite first aid	\$96,157
Dr Yogavijayan Kandasamy	Women's and Children's	Office of Research and Innovation	The Role of Cotside Cameras in Promoting Breastfeeding and Enhancing Parent-infant Attachment and Well-being in the Neonatal Unit	\$118,588
Prof Usman Malabu	Medical	Office of Research and Innovation	Development of Artificial Intelligence for Predicting Diabetic Foot Ulcers in Regional, Rural and Remote Areas	\$118,588
Prof Usman Malabu	Medical	Queensland Technology Future Fund	Moleculight Flourescence Imaging	\$542,039
Prof Andrew Mallett	Corporate	Office of Research and Innovation	GENESIS program (Genomic Exploration for Navigating end-stage kidney disease (ESKD) and Shaping Innovation Solutions)	\$550,000
Prof Andrew Mallett	Corporate	Office of Research and Innovation	Genomic Exploration for Navigating end- stage kidney disease (ESKD) and Shaping Innovation Solutions (GENESIS Program)	\$550,000
Dr Raja Sadhu	Mental Health	TAAHC (Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre)	Interrelationships between sleep disorders, autonomic dysregulation, inflammatory, oxidative stress biomarkers and ACEs in children and adolescents	\$48,978
Ms Cindy Sealey	Corporate	TAAHC (Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre)	Consumer and Community Research Partnerships: Enabling capacity and strength in rural, regional, and remote northern Queensland health and medical research.	\$50,000
Dr Ravi Urkude	Medical	TAAHC (Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre)	NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence to Accelerate Stroke Trial Innovation and Translation	\$50,000
Dr Ravi Urkude	Medical	NHMRC (National Health & Medical Research Council)	NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence to Accelerate Stroke Trial Innovation and Translation	\$50,000
Dr Mike Wu	Surgical	TAAHC (Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre)	Resource requirement prediction for peripheral arterial disease patients using machine learning	\$34,667
Dr Tao Daniel Xing	Medical	RANZCR (The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists)	Circulating human papillomavirus (HPV) DNA for diagnosis and post- treatment surveillance of HPV-related oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinoma (HPV-OPSCC)	\$20,000
Dr Tao Daniel Xing	Medical	TAAHC (Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre)	Artificial intelligence-guided detection of tumour peptides for immunotherapy against therapy-resistant cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma (CSCC)	\$50,000

2024 Study Education Research Trust Account (SERTA) Grants

The SERTA grant scheme provides an important research funding stream supporting:

- THHS staff to advance research and develop research capacity and capability; and
- Discovery and translation through projects that have potential to lead to better health outcomes and/or service delivery improvements for the benefit of northern Queensland communities.

A total of \$1,478,480 was awarded across five grant categories in 2024.

Project Grants

Research Project Grants support the engagement of specialised external expertise, the acquisition of equipment, software, tests and other operating costs associated with the research team or study participants, and study dissemination.

Investigator	Grant/Project Title
Dr Gary Alcock	Postnatal cytomegalovirus infection in preterm infants
Dr Wendy Smyth	Evaluation of a mobile phone application (Pregnancy on Palm) for pregnant women on Palm Island
Dr Timothy Squire	Understanding the impact of magnetic resonance on immune regulatory factor secretion from brain tumour cells during radiotherapy.
Dr Daniel Stoker	Developing a novel screening tool for obstructive sleep apnoea following radiotherapy for head and neck cancer
Prof Jaishankar Raman	Adipose and Fibrofatty Deposits in Chest Muscle and Hearts of Diabetic and Non- diabetic Patients Across a Wide Range of BMIs
Dr Trupti Jadhav	Establishment of a Local Paediatric EEG service for regional QLD- a pilot study
Dr Chelsea Smith	Arterial reflection measures for cardiovascular disease (ARM for CVD)
Mr Ben Phillips	An audit of the Orthopaedic Physiotherapy Screening Clinic at TUH.
Dr Daniel Xing	Circulating human papillomavirus (HPV) DNA for surveillance of HPV-related oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinoma (HPV-OPSCC)
Dr Joanna Longley	ICU Patient and Family App

Research Capacity Building Grants

Research Capacity Building Grants support access by groups of researchers to dedicated research or technical staff employed within THHS to support the delivery of a program of research. The scheme recognises that researchers often require access to colleagues with specific skills and dedicated time to support their research and to help build research capacity within their group or department.

Investigator	Grant/Project Title	Service Group	Awarded (\$)
Dr Matan Ben David	Townsville University Hospital Trauma Research Program	Surgical Services Group	\$134,652
Dr Daniel Xing	Improving skin cancer research capacity by establishing a skin cancer biobank at Townsville University Hospital	Medical Services Group	\$138,553
Dr Trupti Jadhav	Establishment of Local Paediatric EEG service for regional QLD - a pilot study	Women's and Children's Services Group	\$70,000
Dr Ravindra Urkude	Establishment of 'Trial Ready' Stroke Centre at Townsville University Hospital	Medical Services Group	\$140,000
Dr Prasanth Sadasivan Nair	Clinical Outcomes after Surgery for Rheumatic Heart disease in Indigenous patients	Surgical Services Group	\$140,000

Research Fellowship Grants

Research Fellowship Grants support THHS staff who are enrolled in research higher degree studies (e.g., PhD), or are within 5 years of completing a research higher degree. The Fellowship provides protected time for the recipient to undertake research, enabling them to continue their research career progression and support them in attaining their research qualification or securing external competitive research funding

Investigator	Grant/Project Title	Service Group	Awarded (\$)
Miss Sophie Mokrzecki	Teaching final year medical students the skill to prescribe, a longitudinal review	Medical Services Group	\$140,000
Ms Xin Wen	Informed Decision Making for Management of AAA	Surgical Services Group	\$126,561
Mr Rudolf Schnetler	Sub-group bias analysis for statistical and artificial intelligence model evaluation in the clinical domain	Corporate Services	\$133,781
Dr Clinton Gibbs	ELEVATE Study - Phase 2	Medical Services Group	\$113,475

Research Seed Fellowship Grants

Research Seed Fellowships support early-career THHS researchers, including staff who have not yet enrolled in a research higher degree and have not held a competitive research grant as lead or chief investigator.

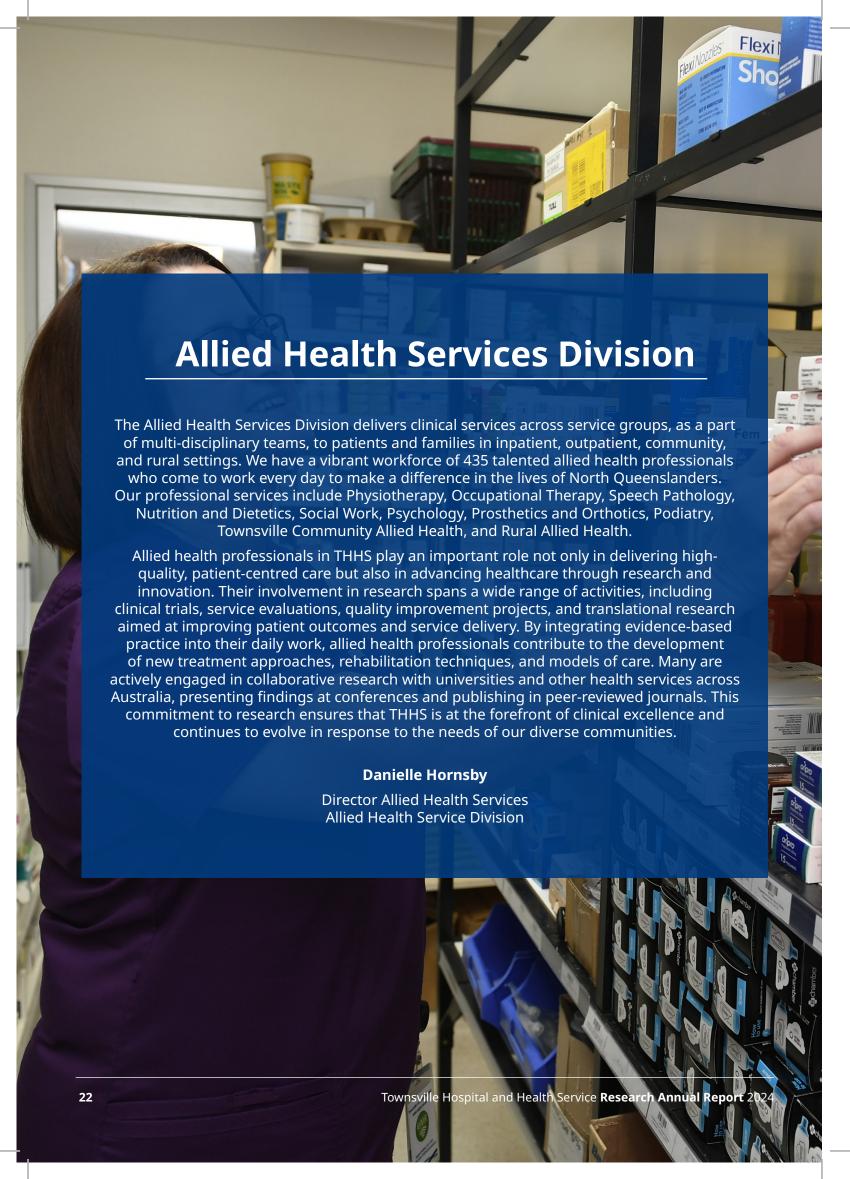
Investigator	Grant/Project Title	Service Group	Awarded (\$)
Miss Stephanie Caldwell	Ischaemic stroke: A retrospective cohort study from a Comprehensive Stroke Centre in Northern Queensland	Corporate Services – Nursing & Midwifery	\$50,000.00
Mrs Marina Bogiatzis	Improving patient outcomes: the role of perioperative education for people undergoing stoma surgery.	Corporate Services – Nursing & Midwifery	\$66,193.00

Registrar Grants

Registrar grants are targeted specifically at medical registrars who are seeking to conduct research in order to meet specialist college training requirements.

Investigator	Grant/Project Title	Service Group	Awarded (\$)
Dr Panuwat Pornkul	10-year retrospective audit of anal squamous intraepithelial detection and management at Townsville University Hospital	Surgical Services Group	\$7,500
Dr Shehan Wickramasinghe	Days at home and days at work after colorectal surgery. A different perspective of surgical care.	Surgical Services Group	\$7,500
Dr Mike Wu	The clinical outcomes and cost burden of arteriovenous fistula thrombosis in regional centres	Surgical Services Group	\$10,000





New research projects approved in 2024 - Allied Health Service Division

Principal Investigators	Department	Study Title
Miss Katherine Lovell	Dietetics	Oral nutrition support preferences of adult inpatients post - surgery in an Australian tertiary regional hospital
Dr Tilley Pain	Allied Health Governance Office	Experience of community dwellers about the diagnosis and management of mild cognitive impairment in regional Australia
Dr Tilley Pain	Allied Health Governance	Patient preferences regarding hospital outpatient specialist clinic appointments: a discrete choice experiment
Dr Shelley Roberts (Griffith University)	Dietetics	Exploring the barriers and enablers to the continuation of nutrition care after discharge for malnourished older adults transitioning from hospital to home
Mr James Bartholomew	Allied Health Governance	Exploring the similarities and differences in allied health professional training needs across the Australian Health system – a cross-sectional survey
Mrs Sonja Schonfeldt- Roy	Physiotherapy Intensive Care Unit	Inspire Beyond ICU – An audit of usual care physiotherapy in Australian and New Zealand ICUs
Ms Felicity Dick	Dietetics Intensive Care	Nutrition practice in critically ill adults - an observational study: NUTRIENT
Dr Gail Kingston	Occupational Therapy	Implementing and sustaining Constraint Induced Movement Therapy (CIMT) as routine practice for patients post stroke in a North Qld rehabilitation setting: staff perspectives.

Research Groups - Allied Health Service Division Allied Health / Health Practitioner Research Group

2024 was a year of transition and change for allied health research. Dr Gail Kingston was made permanent in the Senior Allied Health Research Fellow position and is supporting novice researchers in implementation science and translation research. Dr Stevie Perks moved to the Rural Research Navigator role with Office of Research and Innovation to assist rural clinicians commence their research journey.

Highlights included:

- 13 research papers were published in peer reviewed journals
- Two allied health SERTA applications were successful
 - Sophie Mokrzecki won a seed Fellowship
 - Physiotherapy won a Project Grant to analyse the model of care in the Orthopaedic Physiotherapy Screening Clinic
- Dr Gail Kingston was a Associate Investigator on an NH&MRC grant with collaborators from Menzies School of Health Research to investigate education and training in response to violence-related concussion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.
- Dr Tilley Pain was honoured with Life Membership of the Health Services Research Association of Australia and New Zealand
- Dr Gail Kingston was accepted as an Adjunct Senior Lecturer in the College of Healthcare Sciences at JCU
- Dr Tilley Pain was accepted as Adjunct Professor in the College of Healthcare Sciences at JCU.

A team of allied health researchers developed and evaluated a measure for research impact. The measure was named the Evidence Brief and has now been accepted as an impact measure across Townsville HHS for research and Acquire projects. The team plan to implement the Evidence Brief more broadly across other Hospital and Health Services in northern Queensland. There was a lot of interest in the Evidence Brief when the work was presented by Dr Tilley Pain at the Health Services Research Conference in Brisbane in December 2024.

Key Researchers	PhD Candidates	Novice Researchers
Dr Tilley Pain,	Nerida Firth,	Ife Tokun,
Principal Research Fellow	Pharmacist	Podiatrist
Dr Gail Kingston,	Vidula Garde	Felicity Dick,
Senior Research Fellow	Director of Psychology	Senior Dietitian
Dr Amy Brown,	Sophie Mokrzecki,	Anneke Wake,
Oncology Research Fellow	Senior Pharmacist	Physiotherapist
Dr Kelvin Robertson,	Louisa D'Arrietta	Rachael McMahon,
Director Pharmacy	THHS Librarian	Senior Dietitian
Dr Sonja Brennan,	Nathan Engstrom	Rebecca Smith,
Sonographer	Cardiac Scientist	Speech Pathologist
Dr Stephen Perks,	Alexandra Ryan,	Mark Gooding,
Clinical Educator, Pharmacy	Senior Pharmacist	Physiotherapist
Dr John Baines,	Marcus Powers	Corey Patterson,
Director Medical Physics	Medical Physicist	Speech Pathologist
	Bronwyn Oar, Radiation Therapist	Jessica Lester, Speech Pathologist
	Julie Goodall, Podiatrist	Ben Phillips, Physiotherapist
		Amanda Lanarus, Physiotherapist

Key Collaborators

- University of Technology Sydney
- Menzies School of Health Research
- Queensland University of Technology
- James Cook University
- University of Sydney

Conference Presentations / Papers

Tilley Pain, Gail Kingston, Amy Brown, Emily Saurman, Kelvin Robertson, Stephen Perks, Lisa Thompson. Measuring clinical impact of research growth in an Australian public health service. Health Services Research Conference, December 2024 Brisbane, Queensland.

Tokun, I: Lower Extremity Amputation prevention(LEAP): "Perceived barriers and facilitators to implementing iTCC" Oral abstract

Tokun, I: LEAP: "The Evidence and Construction of Instant Total Contact Casts (iTCC)." Workshop presentation

Department of Physiotherapy Research Group

Key Researchers

- Anya Gordon, Physiotherapist Child Development Services
- Bridee Neibling, Physiotherapist Townsville University Hospital
- Ben Phillips, Physiotherapist Townsville University Hospital
- Anneke Wake, Physiotherapist Townsville University Hospital

Collaborator	Project
Damian Coe (THHS) in collaboration with JCU, QUT, and Mustard Seed IT	Development of an ICT prototype for objective measurement of time spent by a clinical educator providing direct supervision to student physiotherapists.
Anya Gordon (THHS) supporting THHS Principal Investigator Dr Margo Bosanquet, and in collaboration with UQ and Queensland Children's Hospital and Health Service.	Early Screening and Allied Health Therapy Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Infants at High Risk of Cerebral Palsy or Adverse Neurodevelopmental Outcomes.
Sonja Schonfeldt (THHS) in collaboration with a research team from the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.	"MOVIN in ICU" study - an observational study of Mobilisation On Vasopressors & INotropes in intensive care
Sonja Schonfeldt (THHS) in collaboration with researchers from Johns Hopkins University, Queensland Children's Hospital and Health Service and the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.	"PARK-PICU" (Prevalence of Acute Rehabilitation for Kids in the PICU) study – Multi-centre international point-prevalence study
Bridee Neibling (THHS) collaborating with researchers from the University of Melbourne, Edith Cowan University, UQ, Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, JCU, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Royal Adelaide Hospital	A phase IIa muticentre umbrella trial of integrated UPper limb and Language Impairment and Functional Training (UPLIFT)

Speech Pathology Department

Key Researchers

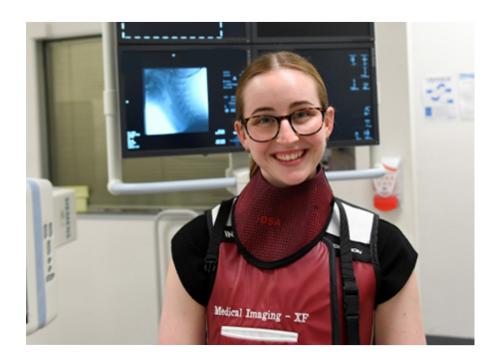
- Courtney Fisher / Acting Senior Speech Pathologist
- Corey Patterson / Senior Speech Pathologist
- Morgan Appleby / Acting Senior Speech Pathologist
- Jasmin Delle Baite / Speech Pathology Team Leader
- Rebecca Smith / Senior Speech Pathologist

Collaborator	Project	
Professor Elizabeth Ward, University of Queensland With Corey Patterson	Evaluation of a shared care model to enable regional/rural patients with head and neck cancer to access local speech pathology care	
Clinical Excellence Queensland Bond University With Rebecca Smith	Development and implementation of the Specialist Palliative Care in Aged Care (SPACE) Project across Queensland	
Fran Cochrane, Griffith University With Morgan Appleby	Exploring Speech pathology services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults with Acquired Communication Disorders The Speech Pathology department supported this research as part of PhD thesis for Frances Cochrane. This research was officially completed in 2024. The primary researcher, Dr Frances Cochrane, presented the research and results at the International Aphasia Rehabilitation Conference 2024. Morgan Appleby presented the research and results to the Queensland Stroke Clinical Network Forum back in June 2024.	
Queensland Children's Hospital Speech Pathology team With Morgan Appleby and the paediatric speech team	Paediatric VFSS E-Learning Module Members of the Paediatric Speech Pathology team continue to be engaged in this study which is led by the QCH Speech Pathology team. THHS involvement has included completing the pilot e-learning module, completing pre and post module surveys, with some team members undergoing a post-implementation interview process.	
Katina Swan, Curtin University With Jasmin Delle Baite	Development and validation of a visuoperceptual measure for the analysis of videofluorosocpic swallow studies for adults with dysphagia	
Sarah Deacon, THHS Dietitian With Courtney Fisher	Heads Up: a digital solution to helping patients manage the demands of head and neck cancer treatment QI project commenced "The delivery of better value speech pathology care in outpatient head and neck cancer."	

Conference Presentations / Papers

Appleby, M: presented at the Queensland Stroke Clinical Network Forum in June 2024 "Exploring Speech Pathology Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adults with Acquired Communication Disorders."

Patterson, P: presented at the Australia & New Zealand Head & Neck Cancer Society conference in Melbourne August 2024 "Evaluating a shared care model supporting regional/rural patients with head and neck cancer to access local speech pathology care". Corey also delivered this same presentation at the Brisbane Cancer Conference in November 2024.



Townsville Hospital research project supports rural and remote cancer patients to receive care closer to home

Eating, talking and swallowing are such fundamental actions that most of us give them little thought; for patients with head and neck cancer (HNC) these important functions can become very difficult, impacting health and quality of life. Following HNC treatments, speech pathology services are critical to address swallowing and communication issues that can persist for years.

Clinical guidelines recommend HNC patients receive treatment under the care of a specialist speech pathologist as part of a specialist multidisciplinary team; however these teams are predominantly based in metropolitan areas at tertiary cancer centres, creating multiple access challenges for the 52% of Queensland Health patients living in rural and remote areas.

A team of Townsville University Hospital clinicians developed an approach to enable rural and remote HNC patients to receive care closer to home - the shared care model - which was so successful the model has been adopted as standard care practice.

Queensland Health Senior Speech Pathologist and project coordinator, Corey Patterson, said the model was designed to address service access inequity in remote and rural areas, reducing patients' costly and exhausting trips to specialist services.

"Previously, patients were travelling hours to receive specialist speech pathology care, placing an additional financial and emotional burden on the patient", Mr Patterson said.

"Following the implementation of a shared model of care, patients are now able to receive the majority of their speech pathology care in their local hospital or health service", he said.

Under the shared care model, eight patients living in the catchments of Ingham, Ayr, Charters Towers, and Mt Isa were identified as they commenced cancer treatment at the Townsville hospital and the shared care model was discussed.

This gave the patients' local clinicians time to prepare, including upskilling where necessary, engaging with the tertiary clinician via telehealth.

The majority of the patients' ongoing cancer survivorship care was then delivered locally, with the tertiary clinician supporting the local clinician as needed.

Mr Patterson said the model improves the patient experience, improves communication

pathways between service providers, and offers rural and remote clinicians the chance to upskill in a specialist area of practice contributing to their job satisfaction.

"Because I have a background working in rural health services, including Ayr and Charters Towers hospitals, I knew it was possible for rural clinicians to be supported to provide speech pathology care for patients closer to home," Mr Patterson said.

"This formed the basis for my drive to help develop a model of care that supports rural generalist clinicians to deliver this necessary care for patients in rural and remote locations", he said.

Qualitative and quantitative feedback from patients was included in the project evaluation. Mr Patterson said two key themes emerged: patient impacts; with patients reporting reduced physical, emotional and financial stress when receiving care closer to home, and quality of care; with most patients noting their care was equally good delivered locally and was more convenient.

Townsville Hospital Acting Senior Speech Pathologist, Courtney Fisher, was one of the 11 staff who participated in the project. She said sharing the care of rural patients was productive for all involved.

"I really enjoyed working with my rural colleagues in ways that I hadn't before and assisting with upskilling in a new specialist area of practice," Ms Fisher said.

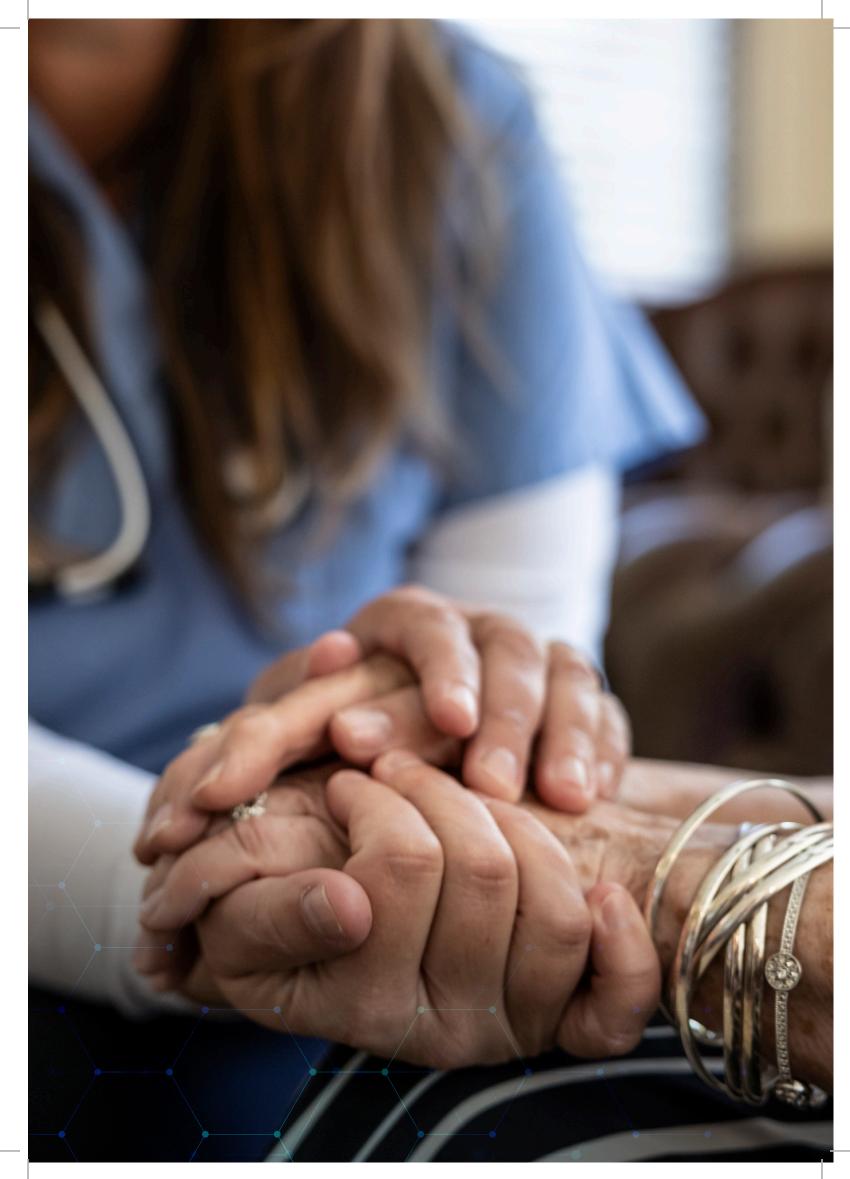
"Giving patients flexibility in a time when they were doing it tough was very powerful", she said.

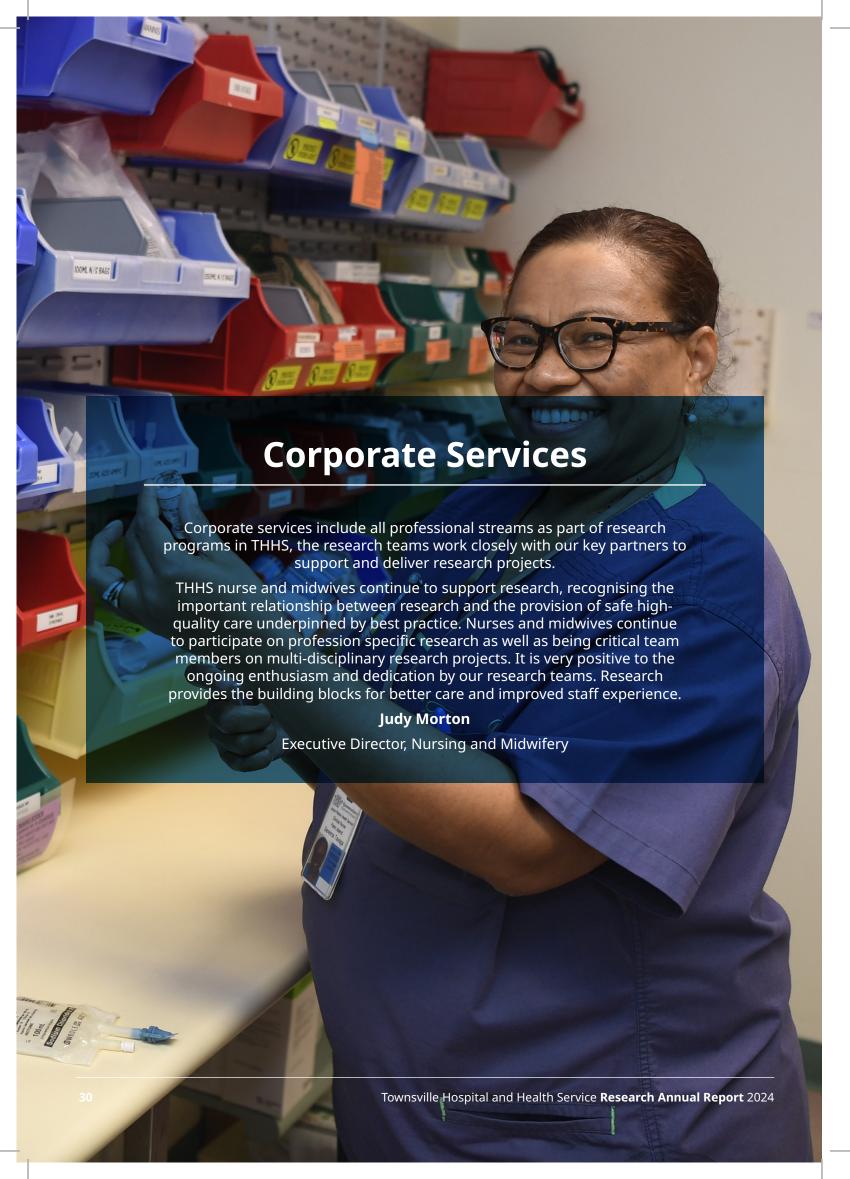
The findings from this project have been published and presented at national and international conferences including the Speech Pathology Australia National conference and the Australian and New Zealand Head and Neck Cancer Society Annual Scientific Meeting.

The shared care model developed during the project could inform health service delivery beyond HNC; Mr Patterson said its applicability to other caseloads was discussed during project evaluation.

"Clinicians felt the model could be easily generalised with other caseloads, such as neurology rehabilitation, paediatric feeding, palliative care, cleft palate, and other specialised caseloads that are often not supported by rural generalist clinicians," he said.

The project was supported by a broad team of researchers, led by Dr Jasmine Foley at the University of Queensland and Professor Elizabeth Ward at the Centre for Functioning and Health Research (CFAHR), with an evaluation made possible with funding through the Office of the Chief Allied Health Officer.





New research projects approved in 2024 - Corporate Services (including whole-of-HHS studies)

Principal Investigators	Department	Study Title
Dr Stephen Whebell	Intensive Care Unit Research Data Lab	Development of a research-oriented platform for collecting high frequency mechanical ventilator waveform data
Mr Vikrant Kalke	Research Data Lab Intensive Care Unit	QLD Sepsis Algorithm Prospective Validation
Professor Sarah Larkins	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health	Progressing Health Equity through Strengthening the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce (IHWD)
Mr Benjamin Freedman	Whole of Health Service	The relationship between Workplace Incivility and Patient Safety: The Mediating effect of Conflict Handling Styles, Resilience, and Self-Efficacy
Dr Sonia Minooee	Research Institute	Evaluation of research opportunities and research engagement among junior doctors
Dr Rebecca Stewart	Medical Education and Workforce Services	North Queensland International Medical Graduate Preparation Program – Scoping Study: NQIMGPrep-SS
Professor Peter Hibbert	Patient Safety & Quality	Improving the health system's response when patients are harmed: A mixed methods study
A/Prof Zhanming Liang	Whole of Health Service	Empower and build the capacities of mid-level health service managers to lead and support the health workforce
Dr Stephen Whebell	Intensive Care Unit Research	Sample sub-group algorithm bias analysis for machine learning evaluation in the clinical domain

Research Groups - Corporate Services Nursing and Midwifery Research Group (NMRG)

The NMRG demonstrated a productive 2024, marked by completed and ongoing research focused on improving patient care through technological innovation, addressing clinical challenges, and building research capacity. Our work in immersive Virtual Reality (VR), Electronic Medical Record (EMR) evaluation, and audio-visual enhanced birth environments highlights our commitment to evidence-based practice and improving healthcare outcomes for patients in Northern Queensland and beyond.

Completed Research

2024 saw the publication of the "Immersive virtual reality in a northern Queensland haemodialysis unit: A cross-over randomised controlled feasibility trial", undertaken with the assistance of a Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre (TAAHC) Seed Funding Grant. To the best of our knowledge, this RCT was the first in the world to explore the feasibility of an immersive virtual reality (VR) experience for patients undergoing haemodialysis. As the only study to have explored the effect of immersive VR on patients' adherence to haemodialysis regimens and on their quality of life worldwide we are looking forward to the presentation of these findings at the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Congress in Helsinki, Finland in 2025.

In the cardiac centre and across the maternity service, nurses and midwives completed surveys on their use and attitudes towards the electronic medical records we call ieMR. ""One size does not fit

all": Nurses' and midwives' opinions about using electronic medical records" was published in 2024 in the Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing and contains the results of this survey highlighting the many challenges and limitations of working with electronic medical records for nurses and midwives. As the primary users of this technology, their feedback is critical to the ongoing development of technology in healthcare. To our knowledge this was the first study to explore ieMR use in both cardiac and maternity settings. The results of this study were presented at the Australian College of Nursing's National Nursing Forum in Cairns, 2024.

"Women and midwives' experiences of an audio-visual enhanced hospital birth environment: An interview study" was published in 2024 in Women and Birth. This study was conducted at the Townsville University Hospital with the aim to explore the experiences of women labouring in a hospital birth environment enhanced with audio-visual technology. Images and sounds of nature were played during labour to promote calmness and create serenity in the hospital birth environment. The audio-visual enhancement of the hospital birth environment was found to enhance women's birth experiences and support midwives providing woman-centred care.

Undertaking studies in busy clinical settings is an achievement. Our research could not have progressed without the active involvement and support from many nurses and midwives across the health service. The Nursing and Midwifery research team, led by Dr Wendy Smyth OAM, thanks everyone who helped conduct studies in their clinical areas and volunteered to participate.

Current research projects

"Harnessing Technology in Labour and Birth for Women with an Increased Body Mass Index (BMI)." This clinical trial is being conducted to understand the impact of a new wireless and beltless fetal monitoring device to improve options for women with an increased BMI. The trial is led by UTS across three sites in Australia including Townsville University Hospital. A special thank you to the midwives in the antenatal clinics, MGP group practice and birth suite who have assisted with recruitment of women for the trial.

"Education provided to people undergoing stoma surgery: viewpoints from patients and stomal therapy nurses."

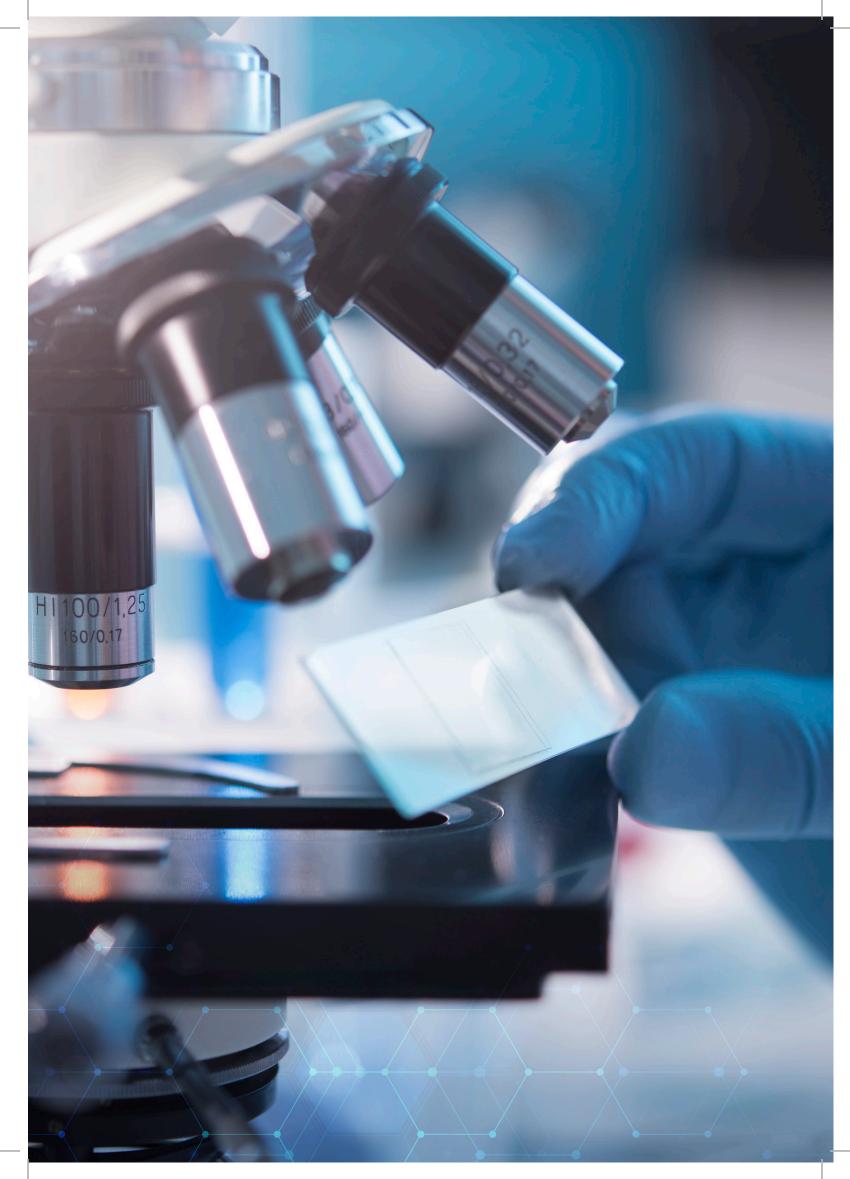
This interview study aims to explore the educational needs of people undergoing colorectal surgery resulting in a stoma (ileostomy or colostomy), by interviewing patients and stomal therapy nurses to gain their perspectives and feedback about their experience as well as their advice for future providers of stoma surgery and future patients of the health service. A special thank you to the Stomal Therapy Nurses at Townsville University Hospital for their assistance in recruiting patients for the study.

2024 Research Grants

- Marina Bogiatzis was awarded the THHS SERTA 2024 Research Seed Fellowship Grant to the value of \$66,193 over 12 months to undertake the research project: Improving patient outcomes: the role of perioperative education for people undergoing stoma surgery.
- Dr Wendy Smyth OAM was awarded the THHS SERTA 2024 Research Project Grant to the value of \$12,440 over two years to undertake the research project: Evaluation of a mobile phone application (Pregnancy on Palm) for pregnant women on Palm Island.
- Marina Bogiatzis was awarded the Mona Kendell Nursing Development Association Inc Research Grant to the value of \$3,000 over two years, commencing in July 2024.

Key Researchers

- Professor Rachel Walker, Professor of Nursing and Midwifery [commenced August 2024]
- Professor Cate Nagle, Professor of Nursing and Midwifery [through February 2024]
- Dr Wendy Smyth OAM, Nurse Researcher
- Ms Mariann Hadland, Nurse/Midwife Researcher
- Mrs Marina Bogiatzis, Acting Nurse Researcher, Clinical Nurse Research
- Mrs Karen Gerrard, Clinical Research Coordinator (Nursing and Midwifery).



Message from new Professor of Nursing and Midwifery Rachel Walker

I am honoured to have been selected for the position of Professor of Nursing and Midwifery, with a conjoint appointment between Townsville Hospital and Health Service (THHS) and James Cook University (JCU).

I began my roles in late August 2024. The initial weeks were a flurry of activity, but I was quickly introduced to key contacts who facilitated my integration with colleagues at both sites. By December, I had the privilege of attending my first TropiQ Symposium.

In this role, my primary objective is to enhance research capacity in nursing and midwifery through the following initiatives:

- Assessing Existing Skills and Knowledge: Conducting evaluations to identify current research capabilities within THHS.
- Providing Research Training Workshops: Offering workshops aimed at generating quality improvement and assurance ideas, in collaboration with both THHS and JCU.
- Encouraging Collaboration and Mentorship: Fostering a culture of collaboration and mentorship to support publishing and research grant submissions across THHS and JCU.
- Promoting Advanced Degrees: Advocating for Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma of Research Methods programs that segue to Master or Doctoral studies, including opportunities for supervision between JCU and THHS.

I look forward to reporting more in the next annual report.



Key members of the Nursing and Midwifery Research Team: Left to right – Karen Gerrard; Mariann Hadland; Prof Rachel Walker; and Marina Bogiatzis (Dr Wendy Smyth OAM inset)

Key Collaborators

- Consumer Advisory Council of the Townsville Hospital and Health Service
- Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre (TAAHC)
- James Cook University Townsville and Cairns
- Sunshine Coast HHS
- University of the Sunshine Coast
- Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service
- · Royal Melbourne Hospital
- University of Technology Sydney
- · Deakin University, Melbourne
- University of Queensland, Brisbane

Conference Presentations

- Smyth, W., McIntosh, C., Elvin, A., & Nagle, C. (2024, 15 August). Robotics and the future of nursing and midwifery Australian College of Nursing's National Nursing Forum, Cairns, Queensland.
- Smyth, W., McArdle, J., Heinrich, G., Manickam, V., Lee, I., Holdsworth, J., Omonaiye, O., & Nagle, C. (2024). Randomised controlled trial demonstrates feasibility of virtual reality in haemodialysis [poster presentation, Australian College of Nursing's National Nursing Forum, Cairns, 15 August]
- Bogiatzis, M., Smyth, W., & Nagle, C. (2024). No turning back: making the most of electronic medical records [Poster presentation Australian College of Nursing's National Nursing Forum, Cairns, 15 August].
- Bogiatzis, M., Smyth, W., Irving, L., Holland, S., & Nagle, C. (2024). Nurses and midwives rise to challenges of electronic medical records [Poster presentation at Australian College of Nursing's National Nursing Forum, Cairns, 15 August].
- Bogiatzis, M., Smyth, W., Hadland, M., & Nagle, C. (2024). Moving ahead with the times: Cardiac nurses' and patients' perceptions of electronic medical records [Oral presentation at TropiQ Research Symposium, 1 October].

Medical Service Group

Throughout 2024–25, research activity within the Medical Services Group (MSG) has expanded in both scope and complexity. Clinicians have demonstrated a strong commitment to inquiry and innovation, with research increasingly integrated into everyday clinical practice. Encouragingly, several team members have secured competitive funding, including grants designed to support dedicated research time—reflecting a growing recognition of the value of clinician-led studies.

MSG continues to champion a culture where research is seen as a core component of high-quality care. Staff are supported to pursue investigations ranging from pilot studies to multi-site trials, with emphasis on building research capability across the group.

The Cancer Clinical Trials Unit has seen ongoing development, with new partnerships, increased participant recruitment, and steady financial growth. In parallel, a dedicated non-cancer trials unit has now been established as an independent entity. This new unit is delivering early wins and contributing meaningfully to the organisation's broader research agenda. While now operating separately, both units maintain close working relationships and collaborate on shared opportunities.

Kelvin Robertson

A/Service Group Director Medical Service Group

New research projects approved in 2024 – Medical Service Group

Principal Investigators	Department	Study Title
Mrs Bronwyn Oar	Radiation Oncology	Stereotactic Ablative Body Radiotherapy for Spinal malignancies on the MR-Linac
Dr Graeme Maw	Emergency	Electric personal MObility DEvices Surveillance (E-MODES) Patient Survey Study: EMODES
Dr Lucy Dunstan	Emergency Intensive Care Unit	A phase III RCT evaluating Fibrinogen Concentrate compared to Cryoprecipitate in severely injured bleeding adult trauma patients with hypofibrinogenaemia: FEISTY II
Dr Olwen Gilbert	Emergency	The FEBCON-ED study: a stepped-wedge cluster randomised controlled clinical trial of usual care vs regular antipyretics for children presenting with a FEBrile CONvulsion to the Emergency Department
Dr Amy Brown	Townsville Cancer Centre	Financial toxicity in regional and rural cancer patients: a North Queensland perspective: FITNQ study
Dr Ravindra Urkude	Neurology	Evaluation of an implementation intervention to enhance multi-national translation of nurse-initiated protocols for fever, hyperglycaemia and swallowing management following stroke: a cluster randomised controlled trial.: QASC Australasia Trial
Dr Amy Brown	Radiation Therapy	Evaluating a Change in Bladder Filling Protocol for Radiation Therapy to the Pelvis
Dr Ravindra Urkude	Neurology	An investigator-initiated and conducted, international, multicentre, stepped-wedge cluster, randomised controlled trial comparing the effects of different intensities of nursing care monitoring for patients with acute ischemic stroke without critical care needs after thrombolysis treatment (OPTIMISTmain Study)
Dr David Mackintosh	Respiratory and Sleep Unit Intensive Care Unit Emergency Department	Monitoring efficacy of non-invasive ventilation using continuous transcutaneous carbon dioxide (TcCO2) versus intermittent arterial carbon dioxide (PaCO2) in acute hypercapnic respiratory failure (AHRF): A pilot study.: CO2MAN
Dr Scott Temple	Dermatology	Can epicutaneous patch tests be satisfactorily applied to a patch test subject without direct oversight of an experienced healthcare worker
Dr Kunwarjit Sangla	Diabetes & Endocrinology	ADCQR - Australian Diabetes Clinical Quality Registry
Ms Janine Carrucan	Infection Prevention & Control	Mapping clinical practice and policy to the 'Management of Peripheral Intravenous Catheters Clinical Care Standard': A multi-site point prevalence study
Dr Hock Choong Lai	Haemotology	Phase 3 Study of Teclistamab in Combination with Lenalidomide versus Lenalidomide Alone in Participants with Newly Diagnosed Multiple Myeloma as Maintenance Therapy Following Autologous Stem Cell Transplantation: MajesTEC-4

Principal Investigators	Department	Study Title
Dr Pradeep Rajagopalan	Respiratory & Sleep	ENCORE - A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo- Controlled, Active Comparator, Multicenter Study to Evaluate the Efficacy and Safety of an Amikacin Liposome Inhalation Suspension (ALIS)-Based Regimen in Adult Subjects with Newly Diagnosed Nontuberculous Mycobacterial (NTM) Lung Infection Caused by Mycobacterium avium Complex (MAC): ENCORE INS-416
Dr Kunwarjit Sangla	Diabetes & Endocrinology	Efficacy and safety of co-administered cagrilintide and semaglutide (CagriSema) 2.4 mg/2.4 mg s.c. once weekly versus tirzepatide 15 mg s.c. once weekly in participants with type 2 diabetes inadequately controlled on metformin with or without an SGLT2 inhibitor: REIMAGINE 4
Dr Jane Royle	Haematology	An open-label, single-arm, phase 2 trial of GIOfitamab anD plrtobrutinib (LOXo-305) in patients with mantle cell lymphoma and prior exposure to a BTK inhibitor - GOIDiLOX NHL37
Dr Hock Choong Lai	Haemotology	A Phase 3, Multicenter, Randomized, Open-Label Trial to Evaluate the Safety and Efficacy of Epcoritamab + Rituximab and Lenalidomide (R2) Compared to Chemoimmunotherapy in Previously Untreated Follicular Lymphoma EPCORE™FL-2: M22-003
Dr Abhishek Joshi	Medical Oncology	A Global Pivotal Study in Patients with KRAS G12C-Mutant, Locally Advanced or Metastatic Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer Comparing First-Line Treatment of Pembrolizumab and LY3537982 vs Pembrolizumab and Placebo in those with PD-L1 ≥ 50% or Pembrolizumab, Pemetrexed, Platinum Chemotherapy and LY3537982 vs Pembrolizumab, Pemetrexed, Platinum Chemotherapy and Placebo regardless of PD-L1 Expression: SUNRAY-01
Dr Shivanshan Pathmanathan	Medical Oncology	A Phase 3 study of Dostarlimab as Sequential Therapy after Chemoradiation compared to placebo in adult participants with Locally Advanced Unresected Head and Neck Squamous Cell Carcinoma: JADE
Dr Vikas Srivastava	Renal	Better Evidence And Translation for Calciphylaxis (BEAT-Calci)
Dr Abhishek Joshi	Medical Oncology	A Phase 3, Randomized, Multi-center, Open-label Study of DB-1303 Versus Investigator's Choice Chemotherapy in Human Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor 2 (HER2)-low, Hormone Receptor Positive (HR+) Metastatic Breast Cancer Patients whose Disease has Progressed on Endocrine Therapy (ET) (DYNASTY-Breast02)
Dr Vikas Srivastava	Renal	Protocol no. X22-0201 & 2022/ETH01097 - The Renal Lifecycle Trial: A Randomized Controlled Clinical Trial to Assess the Effect of Dapagliflozin on Renal and Cardiovascular Outcomes in Patients with Severe Chronic Kidney Disease
Dr Kelvin Robertson	Pharmacy Cardiology	REducing hospital readmissions for high-risk CARDiology patients (RECARD): clinician experiences and expectations of transition of care services

Principal Investigators	Department	Study Title
Prof Usman Malabu	Diabetes & Endocrinology	Community-Based Youth Diabetes Prevention (CYDP) Program for Children of First Nations in Regional Queensland
Dr Amy Brown	Townsville Cancer Centre	Timeframes of colorectal cancer care benchmarked against national optimal care pathway recommendations: a retrospective audit
Associate Professor Colin Banks	Emergency	Suspected Pulmonary Embolism Exclusion with D-dimers in Emergency Departments (SPEED-ED)
Dr Joel Wight	Haematology	A Phase 1b Study of PEP07 (Checkpoint Kinase 1 Inhibitor) in Patients with Advanced Cancer: PEP07-101
Dr Nathan Bain	Medical Oncology	A Phase 1, Multicenter, Open-Label, Dose Escalation, and Dose Expansion Study to Assess the Safety, Tolerability, Pharmacokinetics, Pharmacodynamics, and Antitumor Activity of DCSZ11 as a Monotherapy and in Combination in Patients with Advanced or Metastatic Solid Tumors: DCSZ11-101
Dr Jonathan Cher	Radiation Oncology	The management of lower-grade gliomas in Queensland
Dr Aleisha Strom	Rheumatology	Post-Pandemic Vaccination Coverage in a Regional North Queensland Rheumatology Clinic: CONQUER- Vaccination
Dr Vinay Gangathimmaiah	Emergency	Evaluating Rates of Guideline Concordant Care in the management of Bronchiolitis in the Emergency and Inpatient Setting
Dr Jun Beng Kong	Medical Oncology	BGB-43395-101: A Phase 1a/1b Study Investigating the Safety, Tolerability, Pharmacokinetics, Pharmacodynamics, and Preliminary Antitumor Activity of the CDK4 Inhibitor BGB-43395, Alone or as Part of Combination Therapies in Patients With Metastatic HR+/HER2- Breast Cancer and Other Advanced Solid Tumors
Dr Joel Wight	Haemotology	Multicenter, Multiple Expansion Cohort Phase 1 Study Evaluating the Safety and Activity of DR-0201 as Multiple Ascending Doses in Patients with Relapsed/Refractory B Cell Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma
Associate Professor Erin McMeniman	Dermatology	Hidradenitis Suppurativa Digital Algorithm Project (HSDAP)
Miss Noemie Da Costa	Emergency	Study of HEAR score in Emergency Department Acroynm: SHEAR-ED
Ms Courtney West	Emergency	Contactless vital sign monitoring to improve patient safety in Emergency Departments (VITALS)
Dr Joel Wight	Haematology	Improving the diagnostic accuracy of haematological malignancies in resource-limited settings
Dr Abhishek Joshi	Medical Oncology	A Randomized Open-Label Phase 2/3 Study of BT8009 as Monotherapy or in Combination in Participants with Locally Advanced or Metastatic Urothelial Cancer (Duravelo-2): BT8009-230

Principal Investigators	Department	Study Title
Dr Jun Beng Kong	Medical Oncology	A single arm, open-label, phase II signal-seeking trial of tiragolumab and atezolizumab in patients with advanced solid tumours MoST-TAP: ML43743
Dr Jane Royle	Haematology	A Phase 3, Randomized, Double-blind, Add-on Study Evaluating the Safety and Efficacy of Navtemadlin Plus Ruxolitinib vs Placebo Plus Ruxolitinib in JAK Inhibitor-Naïve Patients with Myelofibrosis Who Have a Suboptimal Response to Ruxolitinib
Dr Kunwarjit Sangla	Diabetes & Endocrinology	REIMAGINE 5: A research study to see how much Cagrisema (1.0mg once Weekly) lowers blood sugar and body weight compared to tirzepatide (5mg once weekly) in people with type 2 diabetes treated with metformin, SGLT2 inhibitor or both.
Dr Kelvin Robertson	Pharmacy	REducing hospital re-admissions for high-risk CARDiology patients (RECARD): patient experiences, expectations, and preferences of transition of care services.
Dr Christopher Heather	Infectious Diseases	Cryptococcal infections in Queensland, Australia: The CryptiQ Study
Dr Hock Choong Lai	Haematology	A Phase 1B, Open-Label Study of Elranatamab In Combination With Iberdomide In Participants With Relapsed Refractory Multiple Myeloma
Dr Joel Wight	Haematology	A Phase 2/3 Multicenter, Open-label, Randomized, Active-Control Study of Zilovertamab Vedotin (MK-2140) in Combination With Standard of Care in Participants With Relapsed or Refractory Diffuse Large B-Cell Lymphoma (waveLINE-003) Protocol No. MK-2140-003
Dr Nathan Bain	Medical Oncology	Phase 3, Multicenter, Randomized, Open-label Study of Ifinatamab Deruxtecan (I DXd), a B7-H3 ADC, Versus Treatment of Physician's Choice (TPC) in Subjects with Relapsed SCLC (IDeate-Lung02) Protocol No. DS7300-188: IDeate-Lung02
Dr Amy Brown	Radiation Oncology	Patient preferences for prostate radiation therapy treatment: understanding and incorporating preferences into shared decision making.

Research Groups - Medical Service Group

Translational Research in Endocrinology and Diabetes (TREAD)

Key Researchers

Prof Usman Malabu, Clinical Director of Endocrinology -Chief Investigator

Prof Kunwarjit Sangla, Medical Director Medical Service Group -Principal Investigator

A/Prof Yong Tan, Senior Endocrine Staff Specialist -Investigator

A/Prof Vasant Shenoy, Senior Endocrine Staff Specialist

Dr Parul Nigam, Senior Endocrine Staff Specialist -Investigator

Dr Divya Srivastava, Senior Endocrine Staff Specialist -Investigator

Dr Swetha Rangaswamaiah, Endocrine Staff Specialist -Investigator

Dr Venkat Vangaveti, Senior Research Officer -Investigator

Dr Erik Biros, Research Coordinator -Investigator

Dr Rachel Hovelroud Endocrine Staff Specialist

Dr Larisa Spheres Advanced Endocrine Registrar

Dr Yi An Pan (Andy) Advanced Endocrine Registrar

Ms Angela Hubert NUM Diabetes and Endocrine Centre

Mrs Sandra Crook NP Diabetes

Ms Cheryl Wade Clinical Nurse - Credentialed Diabetes Educator

Mr Trent Johnston Advanced Podiatrist Professional Lead

Ms Christine Hobbs Senior Podiatrist

Key Collaborators

A/Prof Harshal Deshmukh -Mackay Base Hospital

Prof Jennifer Tyndall -American University of Nigeria

A/Prof Haleagrahara Nagaraja - James Cook University

Prof Yogesan Kanagasingam -University of Notre Dame e-Health Research Centre

Prof John D. Piette, Director Centre for Managing Chronic Disease, University of Michigan, USA

Prof Sabe Sabesan Telehealth and Teletrials TUH

Prof Yoga Kandasamy Senior Staff Specialist Neonatology TUH

Prof Jonathan Golledge Queensland Research Centre for Peripheral Vascular Disease

Prof Cate Nagle Professor of Nursing JCU

Prof Anoop Misra Centre of Excellence for Diabetes and Endocrinology India

Prof Teatulohi (Lohi) Matainaho Chair Science and Technology PNG

Prof Saad Ahmed Professor of Histopathology FMC Abuja Nigeria

Prof Zoltan Sarnyai Neuroscientist and Metabolic Disorders JCU

Prof Ickjai (Jai) Lee Head of IT College of Engineering JCU -AI Diabetes Research

A/Prof Robert Norton Director of Microbiology TUH

A/Prof Carlo Longhitano Staff Specialist Psychiatry/Metabolism TUH/JCU

A/Prof Wendy Li College of Healthcare Sciences JCU

Dr Victoria White Staff Specialist Vascular Surgery TUH

Dr Venkat Vangaveti - JCU Clinical Research and Statistics

Dr Euijoon (Osmond) Ahn College of Engineering JCU -AI Diabetes Research

Dr Erin Waters Director of Medical Services, TAIHS

Emergency Medicine Research Program

The EM Research Program is in a state of consolidation aiming for stability and certainty. The program is leading multiple innovative research projects in core Emergency Medicine topics including pulmonary embolism, low-value care, geriatric head trauma, suspected acute coronary syndrome and contactless vital sign monitoring.

Key Researchers

The EMRP included 22 research active emergency clinicians in 2024:

Vinay Gangathimmaiah, Director of Emergency Medicine Research/Senior Staff Specialist

Bryannii Perks, Clinical Research Coordinator,

Eloise Bletsas, Clinical Research Coordinator,

Hayley Muller, Clinical Research Coordinator,

Elizabeth Michael, Clinical Research Coordinator

Tracy Hess, Clinical Research Coordinator

Assoc/Prof Colin Banks: Principal Investigator/ Senior Staff Specialist

Dr Denise Blake: Principal Investigator/ Senior Staff Specialist

Dr Clinton Gibbs: Principal Investigator/ Senior Staff Specialist

Dr Tanya Mellett: Principal Investigator/ Senior Staff Specialist

Dr Olwen Gilbert: Principal Investigator/ Senior Staff Specialist

Dr Graeme Maw: Principal Investigator/ Senior Staff Specialist

Dr Emma Whyte: Principal Investigator/ Staff Specialist

Dr Madelaine Tarrant, Principal Investigator/ Staff Specialist

Dr Melissah Caughley, Principal Investigator/ Advanced Emergency Medicine Trainee

Dr Heidi Shallow Principal Investigator/Advanced Emergency Medicine Trainee

Dr Jane Dutson, Associate Investigator / Senior Staff Specialist

Mr Travis Cole, Nurse Educator

Key Collaborators

Queensland Emergency Research Support Network (QUEST)

Queensland Geriatric Emergency Medicine Research Network

Rural Research in Emergency Care Network (RRECN)

Paediatric Research in Emergency Departments International Collaborative (PREDICT)

Queensland health facilities:

- Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital
- Princess Alexandra Hospital
- Gold Coast University Hospital
- Cairns Hospital
- Rockhampton Hospital
- Sunshine Coast University Hospital
- Caboolture Hospital
- Redcliffe Hospital
- Logan Hospital
- Redlands Hospital
- The Prince Charles Hospital
- Ipswich Hospital
- Toowoomba Hospital
- Hervey Bay Hospital
- · Queen Elizabeth II Hospital

Universities:

- James Cook University
- Queensland University of Technology
- University of South Australia

Pre-hospital and retrieval service providers:

Retrieval Services
 Queensland

Conference Presentations

- Banks, C: Pulmonary Embolism diagnosis: Annual Scientific meeting, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine
- Blake, D. 2024 September EUBS, Brest, France. Oral presentation-Oxygen Treatment and Retrieval Pathways of Divers with Diving-Related Illnesses in North Queensland: A 15-Year Retrospective Review
- Gangathimmaiah, V: Drivers of low-value care in emergency medicine practice: Regional Rural and Remote Emergency Medicine conference, Darwin
- Mellett, T: Trauma Care in Regional, Rural and Remote Queensland SYMPOSIUM (funded by Emergency Medicine Foundation and Jamieson Trauma Institute) 24 October 2024.

Papers

- Gangathimmaiah V, Evans R, Moodley N, Sen Gupta T, Carlisle K. Drivers of low-value diagnostic tests in emergency medicine practice: a qualitative descriptive study. Emerg Med J. 2025 Mar 4: emermed-2024-214241. doi: 10.1136/emermed-2024-214241. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40037782.
- Mellett T, West C, Emeto TI, Dutson J, Khoo A, Gangathimmaiah V. Evaluation of older patients with minor blunt head trauma to identify those who do not have clinically important traumatic brain injury and can be safely managed without cranial computed tomography. Emerg Med Australas. 2025 Feb;37(1):e14540. doi: 10.1111/1742-6723.14540. Epub 2024 Dec 5. PMID: 39632761.
- Mitchell R, O'Reilly G, Banks C, Nou G, McKup JJ, Kingston C, Kendino M, Piamnok D, Cameron P. Triage systems in low-resource emergency care settings. Bull World Health Organ. 2025 Mar 1;103(3):204-212. doi: 10.2471/BLT.23.290863. Epub 2025 Jan 30. PMID: 40026666; PMCID: PMC11865852.
- Blake DF, Crowe M, Lindsay D, Turk R, Mitchell SJ, Pollock NW. Divers treated in Townsville, Australia: worse symptoms lead to poorer outcomes. Diving Hyperb Med. 2024 Dec 20;54(4):308-319. doi: 10.28920/dhm54.4.308-319. PMID: 39675739; PMCID: PMC12018695.



Dr Tanya Mellett

Improving the diagnosis and treatment of older people who present to Emergency with head trauma

In a first of its kind study in Australia, Townsville HHS Emergency Physician Dr Tanya Mellett has found results to challenge the current accepted diagnostic pathway that is used for older patients (aged 65 and older) who have experienced minor head injury.

Currently when older patients present to the Emergency Department with a minor head injury, the accepted practice is to perform a routine cranial Computed Tomography (CT brain) scan to assess for potential brain bleeding or other Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). If the person has presented to a rural or remote health service without a CT scanner, they may need transfer to a larger site such as Townsville University Hospital.

CT scans increase the patient's length of stay in Emergency but may not change management. This increases their risk of delirium (confusion) and getting infections from other patients. Dr Mellett's research has found that many of these patients can be safely diagnosed and effectively managed without the need for them to undergo CT scans.

Dr Mellett's study recruited 276 patients from 10 October 2022 to 31 May 2023. The most common mechanism of injury was groundlevel fall (93.8%). One in four patients was from nursing homes, 30% had dementia and 52% were on blood thinners. 81% had a CT brain during the ED visit. Seven (2.5%) patients had clinically important TBI (defined as needing hospital admission and/or neurosurgical intervention) within 42 days of index ED presentation. Patients with TBI had either external signs of head injury or abnormal neurological exam. All patients with TBI were treated conservatively after shared decisionmaking. In practice, this means speaking with the patient (if they have capacity) or their substitute decision maker about the pros and cons of neurosurgical intervention, if offered. Conservative management included ensuring adequate pain relief and potentially stopping their blood thinners for an amount of time.

The study, supported by a funding grant from the Emergency Medicine Foundation's Trauma Care program, found that adopting a personcentred approach to care that includes inviting shared decision-making by the patient and their family in their treatment plan, would improve the care of these patients and in future would likely reduce the need for CT scans in many cases.

As a clinician with a passion for improving the care provided to older adults in the emergency setting, Dr Mellett is the Principal Investigator of an upcoming multi-site study titled "Characteristics and outcomes of residents of aged care facilities presenting to Queensland Emergency Departments with falls: A multi-site, cross-sectional study". This study will assess 10 hospital Emergency Departments in Queensland and their approach to minor head injury in the older patient that resides in nursing homes. This will allow for bench marking across the state.

EMF continues to offer grants in its Trauma Care program. THHS's emergency researchers are very grateful for the support and funding that the EMF provides.

Pharmacy Department Research Group

The two current TUH pharmacy department PhD candidates, Alexandra Ryan and Sophie Mokrzecki, are progressing through candidacy well.

- Sophie Mokrzecki is investigating Australian and New Zealand medical students' confidence and preparedness to prescribe. She has recently had her Phase 1 paper published, has just completed her mid-candidature review and is expected to complete her work at the end of 2026.
- Alexandra Ryan also had her second paper related to her PhD published at the end of March this year. Her work investigates look-alike, sound-alike medication-related incidents. She aims to design, implement and evaluate processes for safe medication management both in perioperative hospital settings and pharmacy department settings.

Several larger projects remain ongoing within the pharmacy department, including a Partnered Prescribing project which was previously implemented in the admission reconciliation model and has now been rolled out in the discharge reconciliation models in several settings. Pharmacists in the Acute Admitting Unit, Medical 5 Ward and Rehabilitation Unit are now collaborating with prescribers to prepare accurate and complete discharge reconciliations for discharging patients, with the aim of improving medication safety for patients returning to the community and representing to hospital.

Intern and resident pharmacists within our department continue to have consistent involvement in quality improvement and research activities.

In 2024, our resident pharmacists completed audits including:

- Medication supply requests and delays in medication dosing when utilising a new ieMR medication ordering system (Keely Buckingham), and
- Tapentadol IR: Patterns of prescribing and use across the Townsville University Hospital (Anthony Ma).

Our current residents are investigating:

- empirical antimicrobial appropriateness in paediatric community acquired pneumonia patients (Keliena Seaton),
- fluconazole prescribing practices at TUH (Kathryn Tidmas), and
- a follow-up review of the impact of a surgical pre-admission pharmacist on the documentation rates of anticoagulant and antiplatelet management prior to elective surgery (Lily Arrate).

The pharmacy department continues to collaborate with James Cook University Pharmacy honours students and support their research projects. One of our pharmacists Matthew Syrnyk is conducting medication stewardship projects in collaboration with the students, to explore the potential expansion of medication stewardship at TUH. His work includes a psychotropic stewardship project, in which final year pharmacy students are undertaking a retrospective audit exploring the breadth of pharmacist involvement in the care of mental health patients in the Adult Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit at TUH. While a large focus of the audit involves quantifying completion of medication histories, medication reconciliation and discharge medication lists, the students are also determining actual and potential interventions for psychotropic medications, ranging from appropriate prescribing of PRN antipsychotics, involvement in therapeutic drug monitoring for drugs such as lithium and clozapine, to their involvement in pathology monitoring such as blood glucose monitoring for second generation antipsychotics. Using this information, the students will propose a potential role for pharmacists in psychotropic stewardship within our pharmacy department.

Matthew is also supporting an anticoagulation stewardship project in which a retrospective clinical audit is being undertaken, exploring the extent of pharmacist involvement in the care of patients prescribed anticoagulants across the Surgical 1, Surgical 2 and Surgical 3 areas. In this study also, a large focus will be on quantifying the pharmacist's completion of medication histories, medication reconciliation, and discharge medication records. In addition, actual and potential interventions for anticoagulation therapies are being explored, including VTE prophylaxis and risk assessment interventions, their role in therapeutic drug monitoring for heparin infusions and therapeutic enoxaparin, and interventions involving patients with renal impairment and at extremes of body weight. Using this information, a potential role for pharmacists in anticoagulation stewardship within the pharmacy department will be proposed.

Key Researchers

Emma Dall'Alba, Senior Pharmacist – Clinical Education, Townsville University Hospital
Cassie Lanskey, Senior Pharmacist, Clinical Education, Surgical Services, Townsville University
Hospital

Alexandra Ryan, Advanced Pharmacist, Townsville University Hospital
Sophie Mokrzecki, Senior Pharmacist, Townville University Hospital
Dr Stevie Perks, Research Navigator Pharmacist, Townsville University Hospital
Matthew Syrnyk, Pharmacist, Townsville University Hospital
Luke Calleja, Pharmacist, Townsville University Hospital
Anthony Ma, Resident Pharmacist, Townsville University Hospital
Lily Arrate, Pharmacist, Townsville University Hospital
Keliena Seaton, Resident Pharmacist, Townsville University Hospital

Kathryn Tidmas, Resident Pharmacist, Townsville University Hospital

TUH Renal Department Research Group

In 2024 Prof Mallett had 33 papers accepted and the THHS renal research team has grown with commencement of a dedicated kidney trials research coordinator. Dr David McIntyre also graduated from his PhD program, with a growing number of PhD students now supervised from the department (11) with one submitting their thesis in late 2024 and another being conferred in mid-2024.

Key Researchers

- Prof Andrew Mallett
- Dr George Kan
- Dr Vikas Srivistava
- Dr Valli Manickham
- Dr David McIntryre
- · Belinda Elford

Key Collaborators

- KidGen Collaboration
- Australian Genomics
- ClinGen
- KDIGO
- Princess Alexandra Hospital, Urology
- Australasian Kidney Trials Network
- Westmead Hospital Nephrology/WIMR
- · Garvan Institute
- University of Newcastle (UK)
- · Monash University/ASPREE Consortium

Conference Presentations / Papers

- 2024 American Society of Nephrology, Kidney Week
- 2024 Human Genetics Society of Australasia, Annual Scientific Meeting.

Townsville Cancer Centre Research

We continue to grow research at Townsville Cancer Centre, with both sponsored/collaborative clinical trials and investigator-led research.

There are currently over 35 investigator-led studies in the research areas of Person-Centred Care (such as Models of Care, Optimal Care Pathways, Patient Experiences and Service Delivery), and Innovative Treatments and Technologies.

We have 6 higher-degree research candidates (both PhD and Masters) amongst our clinicians in both Medical Oncology and Radiation Oncology. Dr Zulfiquer Otty submitted his PhD thesis in late 2024, and we look forward to celebrating his successful conferral soon.

We have participated in two national investigator-led studies that are First-Nations focused, to contribute to closing the gap in cancer care. Mettassa Zaro and Amy Brown presented learnings from the study "Supporting our Carers" and won best oral presentation prize at Clinical Oncology Society of Australia ASM 2024. Dr Ravi Marwah was awarded the RANZCR Bourne and Langlands Prize for his paper "Reirradiation vs Systemic Therapy vs Combination Therapy for Recurrent High Grade Glioma: A Meta-Analysis of Survival and Toxicity"

Our Clinical Trials Unit currently has 93 active experimental drug trials led by a team of 18 Principal Investigators across 3 specialities (Medical Oncology, Haematology and Radiation Oncology). Our current portfolio of studies range from phase 1 to 3, and are sponsored by international pharmaceutical / biotech companies and / or collaborating groups such as ALLG, TROG, ANZCOG etc.

We continue to be a leader in the tele trials space in Queensland with 10 active studies run under this model.

Day to day our team coordinates the care of over 200 patients that are currently participating in clinical trials, conducting over 900 clinical trial visits in 2024.

Our Clinical Trials Unit team currently comprises of 2 Clinical Trials Fellows / Registrars, 5 Clinical Trials Pharmacists & Assistant, 1 Clinical Trials Manager / NUM, 10 Clinical Trial Coordinators (Senior Nursing or Radiation Therapists), 2 Administration and Business Support Officers and 2 Medical Students.

Key Researchers

Medical Oncology	Radiation Oncology	Clinical Trials
Abhishek Joshi	Amber Scull	
Corinne Ryan	Ariadne Brodmann	
JB Kong (Clinical Trials Fellow)	Bronwyn Oar	
Joanne Tan	Chantelle Fisher	
Nathan Bain Sabe Sabesan	Daniel Xing	Jenny Walsh
Shivanshan Pathmanathan	Debbie Mentor	Steven Capell
Zulfiquer Otty	Deepti Patel	Dylan Taylor
· ,	Elizabeth Denyer	Ashleigh Williams
II. a martala ma	Glen Newman	Kate Tweedie
Haematology	Glenn De Vine	Melanie Taylor
Andrew Birchley	James Gallo	Rachel Doyle
Edward Morris	Jessie McKinnon	Janette Hughes
Hock Choong Lai	John Baines	Sharon Lazzaroni
Jane Royle	Keeley Robinson	Nicole Chapman
Joel Wight Rachael Boles	Laura Baker	Elizabeth Heyer
Gerena Kosciejew (Clinical Trials	Linda Marsh	Kim Pattinson
Registrar)	Marchant van der Walt	Kareela Campbell
Vibooshini Ganeshalingam	Marcus Hu	Judy Page
	Marcus Powers	Wendy Harvey
Palliative Care	Mitchell Duncan	Theresa Joseph
Claus Bader	Peter Stokes	Mia Gedara
Ofra Fried	Ravi Marwah	Elizabeth Martin
Richard Corkill	Robert Crane	Savio Matthews
	Savannah Brown	Ben Elliot
oss Townsville Cancer Centre	Shannon Robards	
Amu Drouge	Stephen Gibson	
Amy Brown Candice Finlay	Sue Hewitt	
Georgia Slapp	Tim Squire	

Key Collaborators

Collaborator	Project
Prof Sabe Sabesan	Associate investigator on the Smarter Hospitals NHMRC Partnership Project
Australasian Lymphoma Alliance Australasian Leukaemia and Lymphoma Group	Various haematology projects
QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute	Participating site in the "Patient Reported Outcome Measures in cancer care: a hybrid effectiveness- Implementation trial to optimize Symptom control and health service Experience" study.
Cairns HHS and Mackay HHS	Evaluating the implementation of intracranial stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS)
University of Queensland	Collaborations with Indigenous Health focus, including: Supporting our CarersThe 4Cs Project
James Cook University	Various PhD projects & MBBS Honours project
Queensland University of Technology	Collaborations in Radiation Therapy grow every year, including an RT honours student yearly who, during a 10-week clinical placement, have a dedicated project day per week to collect data for their research project

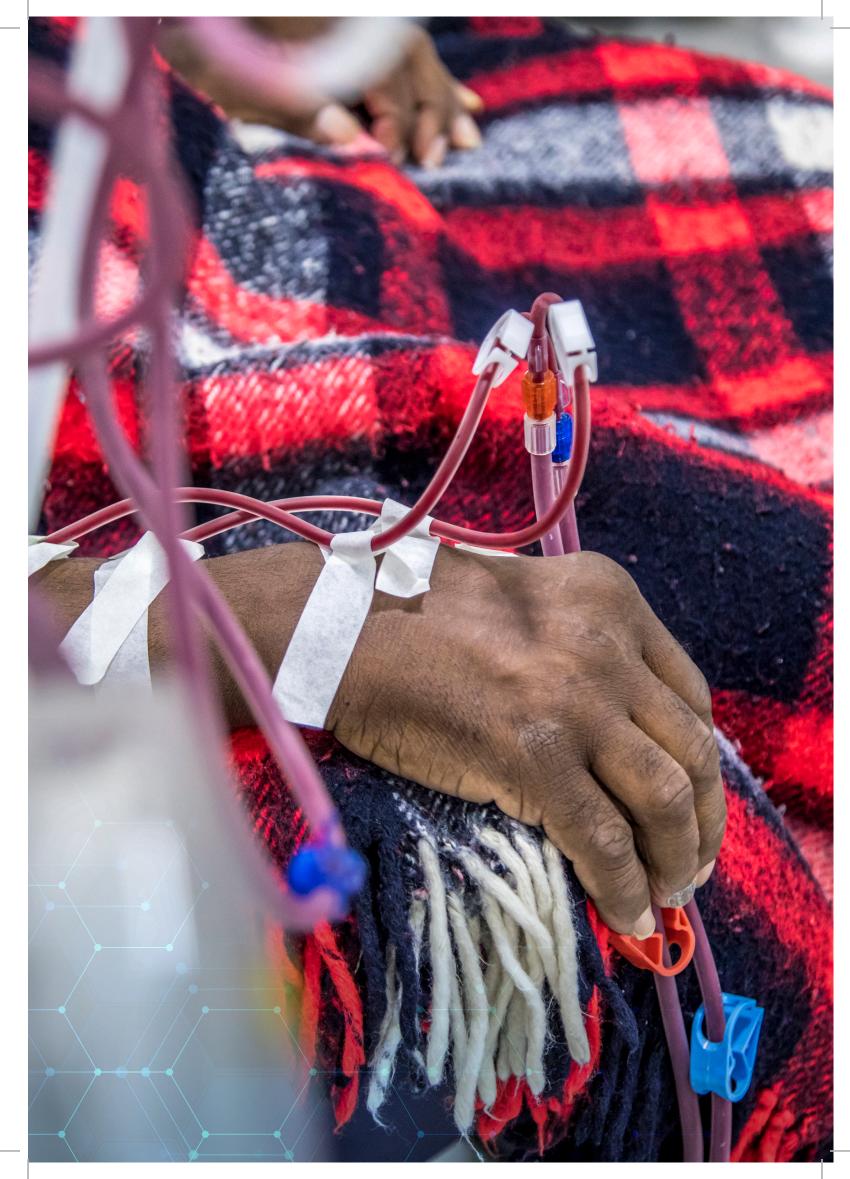
Conference Presentations / Papers (selected)

Pathmanathan, S: Clinical Oncology Society of Australia ASM, Gold Coast, November 2024 Telehealth: Bridging the gaps in first nations cancer care (Invited)

Zarro, M and Brown, A: "Helping my mob"—embedding a First Nations research coordinator to improve First Nations engagement and recruitment

Adams, N: RANZCR ASM, Perth, November 2024 Feasibility of Magnetic Resonance Imaging guided stereotactic reirradiation of locally recurrent prostate tumours: A pilot study

Marwah, R: Delays to Post-Operative Radiation Therapy for Patients with Head and Neck Squamous Cell Carcinoma: A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Clinician Perspectives





Danielle Seden, Mettassa Zaro and Aunty Liela Murison

Helping our mob

A team of THHS staff have made it their mission to improve the supports available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families who could benefit from access to the latest treatments and medicines through clinical trials and research studies.

Led by Mettassa Zaro, a proud Nywaigi/
Manbarra; Dauereb Meriam and South Sea
Islander man and Aboriginal Health Worker,
the team trialled the embedding of First Nations
Research Coordinators within the Townsville
Cancer Centre. Working alongside THHS
Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officers, the FNRCs
engaged with potential study participants
and, through a culturally-sensitive approach,
developed connection and trust. The result
of the project showed a significant, threefold,
increase in participation of First Nations people
in research study recruitment when compared
with the results achieved by non-Indigenous
clinician researcher/research assistant teams.

The approach taken by the team went far beyond the traditional clinical trial/research recruitment discussion. Through free-flowing conversations that took place when and for as long as the patients wanted, the team focussed on the patients' holistic needs and interests, exploring topics including, but extending beyond, their health, to encompass their families, interests, hobbies, and broader concerns. By taking the time to understand the patients' human journeys, some of which have been long and complex, the team established a level of rapport and trust that patients and their families needed in order to feel safe to consider participating in the study. Mettassa applies this to all research, including two other clinical studies he has worked on.

Put simply, the team focussed on being human. In Mettassa's words, "we're humans before we're patients".

The team worked from the understanding that patients will remember what you did for them and how you made them feel. And feedback from First Nations participants in this project is that they valued the approach that was taken to engage with them and want more access to First Nations staff when considering options to join clinical trials and research projects.

Mettassa and his mentor Associate Professor Amy Brown presented their study at the 51st Annual Scientific Meeting of the Clinical Oncology Society of Australia (COSA) in November 2024 where they won the "Best of the Best" presentation award.

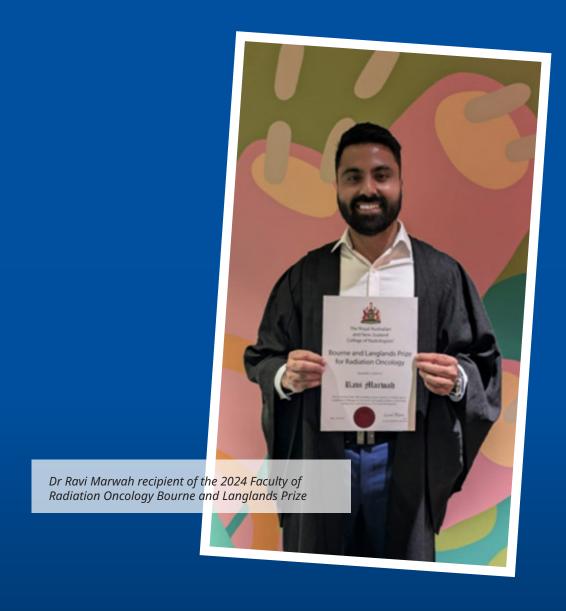
Far from being satisfied with the results of this initial project, Mettassa is now leading a project proposal to build the First Nations research team at THHS and, by doing so, is seeking to make a REAL difference for his mob in his own back yard. In 2024 Mettassa attended a workshop "Australian Stroke and Heart Research Accelerator – Early to Mid-Career Researchers" with the a community-led/First Nations partnership focus in Perth and has been regularly sought out to speak at national conferences and meetings about his approach to engaging First Nations participants in research.

The next phase of Mettassa's own research journey is being undertaken with the guidance and inspiration from a highly-experienced team of researchers including:

- Professor Gail Garvey (AM), a proud Kamilaroi woman, an NHMRC Research Leadership Fellow, and Professor of Indigenous Health Research in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Queensland
- Associate Professor Julieanne Coombes, a proud Gumbaynggirr woman and Acting Co-Head for the Guunu-manna (Heal) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program at the George Institute for Global Health, Sydney, and
- THHS's own Associate Professor Amy Brown, research fellow for Townsville Cancer Centre,

As a testament to the calibre of these mentors, the Guunu-maana team won the NHMRC Research Quality Award for 2025 – an award which recognises outstanding contributions to supporting and uplifting the quality of Australian health and medical research.

With the guidance and support of this eminent team, his family and his colleagues, Mettassa is committed to growing the First Nations research workforce at THHS so that increasingly our First Nations patients can benefit from the opportunity to connect with others from their mob, and better engage and benefit from the opportunities that involvement in clinical trials and research can bring. As Mettassa contends "We need this program".



Award-winning research produces evidence to inform future treatment of recurring aggressive brain tumours

THHS Radiation Oncology Registrar Dr Ravi Marwah was awarded the prestigious 2024 Bourne and Langlands Prize by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists for his publication comparing approaches to the treatment of recurrent high-grade gliomas. The prize, awarded for outstanding research by a registrar, can only be received once by any registrar across their five-year training program – making it all the more impressive as Dr Marwah is only in his first year of registrar training with the College.

High-grade gliomas are fast-growing tumours that occur in the brain and spinal cord. Despite initial treatment approaches typically involving combinations of surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, almost all patients experience tumour recurrence. The vast majority of tumour recurrences occur very close to the original tumour site, suggesting that localised or targeted treatments such as surgery and/or an additional course of radiation (or reirradiation) are important in controlling the disease.

As only a small percentage of patients (20-30%) with recurring high-grade gliomas have tumours which are able to be surgically removed, clinicians must consider whether to administer reirradiation to target the local area of the tumour. However, the use of reirradiation has proven controversial given risks that it can cause spinal cord or brain damage or even death. As a result, many clinicians have tended to be cautious with its use.

In the absence of adequate "gold standard" evidence or any clear best-practice international clinical guidelines for the treatment of patients with this devastating disease, the approach favoured by most clinicians is to treat recurring high-grade gliomas using chemotherapy.

Published in 2023 in the Journal of Neuro-Oncology, Dr Marwah's study, undertaken in collaboration with THHS Associate Professor Daniel Xing and Dr Timothy Squire, and colleagues from the National University Cancer Institute Singapore, and Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness and Research Centre, Austin Health, Melbourne, compared the survival and side-effect outcomes of different combinations of radiotherapy, chemotherapy and combination therapies, including those using targeted cancer drugs such as bevacizumab.

Drawing together findings from 31 studies involving a total of 2,084 participants, the research team found significant increases in patient survival measures, including overall survival and progression-free survival, with the use of combination therapies

combining reirradiation and systemic therapy, with side effects remaining at similar levels to the use of reirradiation or systemic therapy alone.

Importantly, the team highlighted the benefits of bevacizumab, a monoclonal antibody which has radioprotective properties and prevents growth of tumour blood vessels. While bevacizumab is often used to treat radiation necrosis once it has occurred, it is not regularly used to prevent necrosis from occurring. The team's analysis found that, when bevacizumab is used alongside reirradiation, the risk of radiation necrosis is reduced, and its use may allow for the safer application of higher doses of radiation as well as for the treatment of larger tumours.

This study has provided important evidence to help inform clinicians in their treatment planning for patients with recurring high-grade gliomas. From this study, further research is planned to investigate the impact of different glioma treatment approaches on the quality of life of patients.

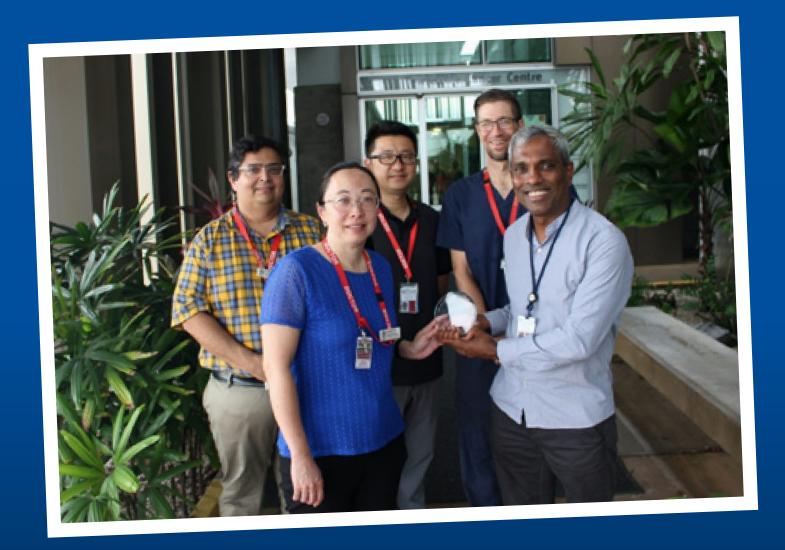
In addition to this study, Associate Professor Xing is leading a wider program of research that is helping to position Townsville as a leading and innovative radiation oncology service. His research interests focus on:

- the development of precision oncology medicine using imaging and serum biomarkers;
- skin cancer clinical and translational research; and
- health-economic research to deliver the optimal radiation oncology services especially in rural and remote Queensland.

Associate Professor Xing has presented at various national and conferences and has published over 37 peer-review journal articles and book chapters. He currently holds research grant funding exceeding \$350,000 as the Principal Investigator / supervisor and a further \$200,000 as co-investigator, focusing on innovative approaches to head and neck cancer, skin cancer treatment and patient care.

Associate Professor Xing's current research projects are:

- Establishing a biobank of skin cancer in North Queensland (NQ) to better understand the immune oncology and molecular pathogenesis of the highly prevalent types of cancer in NQ; and
- to develop a liquid biopsy of circulating tumour DNA platform at James Cook University (JCU) with the aim of providing personalized oncology medicine to patients in NQ.



Townsville Cancer Centre awarded 2024 Excellence in AGITG Site Performance Award - Regional, Rural and Remote Category

The Australasian Gastro-Intestinal Trials Group (AGITG) is a multidisciplinary collaborative group of medical and research professionals that conducts clinical trials and related biological research to improve treatments for gastro-intestinal (GI) cancers: those of the oesophagus, stomach, liver, pancreas, gallbladder, large and small bowel, rectum and anus.

Initially formed in 1991, AGITG members, including THHS clinicians, have conducted 93 research studies involving over 9,400 patients across 285 sites throughout Australia, New Zealand, Asia, Europe, North America and the Middle East. Through the dedication of its members, AGITG research as improved the life expectancy, treatment and quality of life for patients with gastro-intestinal cancers.

In 2022 AGITG introduced a 'Regional, Rural and Remote' (RRR) category within its Excellence in AGITG Site Performance Award, recognising sites that are striving to reduce barriers for people to access trials. This award was won by the Townsville Cancer Centre in 2024.

The Townsville Cancer Centre serves a large population over a vast geographical range with patients coming from areas including the Torres Strait Islands, Cape York Peninsula and the Gulf of Carpentaria. Providing care to a diverse population, the team has a strong commitment to equity for RRR communities and First Nations Australians.

"I am delighted that Townsville Cancer Centre is being recognised for the work it does. We have a fantastic team of clinicians, researchers, scientists and support staff who punch well above their weight," said radiation oncologist, Dr James Gallo.

With a network of radiation oncologists, medical oncologists, haematologists, allied health staff and a clinical research team working across various sites, the Townsville Cancer Centre actively works with major research centres, hospitals and universities across Australia and internationally.

"Living regionally, there is an enormous sense of community and partnership. This helps us collaborate in our research and focus our efforts to help the communities we serve," adds James.

James credits colleagues like medical oncologist Professor Sabe Sabesan with inspiring younger researchers like himself to "rethink what is possible outside metropolitan centres."

The team is involved in several AGITG trials and has enthusiastically embraced the use of teletrials, recognising the benefits this model offers in extending access to clinical trials to patients who live outside of major population centres.

"The implementation of practical solutions such as teletrials has been a boon, both for Townsville Cancer Centre and the people who live in these remote areas," says James.

"I feel a great sense of satisfaction when I can offer someone living in a rural or remote location access to a clinical trial. It makes an enormous difference to our patients, who often have difficulty accessing high quality and timely healthcare that we may take for granted."

https://asm.gicancer.org.au/

Gastroenterology

In 2024 the Gastroenterology Department focused on establishing the North Queensland Liver Tumour Library to improve HCC detection and treatment. The Department is still in the collection phase with plans on assessing samples through a new project.

Projects undertaken by the team include:

- Guideline for Periprocedural Management of adult outpatients with Diabetes Mellitus having day endoscopic procedures still ongoing.
- Food Bolus Impaction presentations retrospective audit
- · Audit of endoscopy referrals for iron deficiency anaemia
- HCC clinical audit data collection underway.

Key Researchers

· Rozemary Karamatic

Key Collaborators

Collaborator	Project
James Cook University – Professor Lionel Hebbard	Establishing the North Queensland Liver Tumour Library: improving hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) detection and treatment. The creation of this biobank with JCU is continuing to support the expansion of liver cancer research activity within the health service.
Cairns Base Hospital	Hepatitis HCC Audit

Neurology

Key Researchers

- Dr Ravindra Urkude (TUH Acute Trials)
- Dr Moira Smith (JCU Rehabilitation Trials)
- Associate Professor Joseph Moxon (JCU AITHM)

Key Researchers

Collaborator	Project
Professor Leonid Churilov, University of Melbourne Professor Bruce Campbell, The Royal Melbourne Hospital Associate Professor Kate Hayward, University of Melbourne	(Co-Leads, Trials Workstream of the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence to Accelerate Innovation and Translation in Stroke Trials)
Dr Vinay Gangathimmaiah, Director of Emergency Medicine Research Dr Usman Manzoor, Clinical Director of Interventional Radiology Dr Paul Chapman, Director of Rehabilitation Danielle Hornsby, Executive Director of Allied Health Dr Gail Kingston, Senior Allied Health Research Fellow/ Assistant Director Occupational Therapy	THHS
Dist Prof Jonathan Golledge, Head of the Queensland Research Centre for Peripheral Vascular Disease and The Vascular Biology Unit at JCU Prof Ruth Barker, Adjunct Professor - The Cairns Institute Frances Cochrane, Senior Lecturer – Speech Pathology Kylie Bower, Manager of the Community Rehab Alliance, JCU Murtupuni	JCU
Dr Ranjith Menon, Consultant Neurologist Matt Hiskens, MHHS Research Fellow and Dietitian	Mackay HHS
Dr Ramesh Durairaj, Consultant Geriatrician and Stroke Physician Tania Cavanagh, Executive Director of Allied Health Dr Kath McFarlane, Allied Health Senior Research Fellow	Cairns and Hinterland HHS
Dr Umayl Laxmanan, Director of Internal Medicine Andrew Quabba, Executive Director of Allied Health Daniel Williams, Subacute/rehab OT Hannah Russell, Allied Health Clinical Lead	North West HHS
Professor Richard Lindley, Professor of Geriatric Medicine	University of Sydney
Andrea van Grinsven, Chief Executive Officer	Alliance Rehabilitation

Dr Ravindra Urkude and Dr Moira Smith collaboration expands stroke treatment options for patients 60 Townsville Hospital and Health Service Research Annual Report 2024 Stroke is a leading cause of disability in Australia. In 2020, a Deloitte Access Economics study, commissioned by the Stroke Foundation, estimated the national economic impact of stroke that year was \$6.2 billion in direct financial costs and a further \$26.0 billion in lost wellbeing and premature mortality. Some 445,000 stroke survivors – and their families – were dealing daily with the emotional cost. And the number is growing. More people are surviving stroke. The challenge is to maximise their recovery – and quality of life – through rehabilitation.

To address these issues, the Townsville University Hospital's Trial-Ready Stroke Centre is the first centre of its kind to open in Northern Queensland, following funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre (TAAHC). Established in 2024, Trial-Ready Stroke Centre is bringing together clinicians from Townsville HHS, Mackay, Torres and Cape York, Cairns and Mount Isa health services as well as academic collaborators from The University of Sydney and James Cook University (JCU) to make available new stroke recovery treatments in what is expected to be a lifesaving endeavour.

Townsville University Hospital (TUH) Director of Neurology Dr Ravindra Urkude said the centre would drastically improve opportunities for stroke patients to access clinical trials to support stroke recovery.

"The investment in the expansion of stroke clinical trials in northern Queensland reflects an investment in the patients across this region and will ultimately improve their recovery following a stroke".

JCU senior physiotherapy lecturer and neurological rehabilitation researcher Dr Moira Smith said the initiative was a key collaboration between clinicians caring for patients and academics studying the condition.

"The collaboration reflects the importance of this health issue to regional Australians. Northern Queensland stroke patients will now have access to clinical trials researching medication options such as thrombolysis and physical treatments such as rehabilitation.

TAAHC Chair Professor Ian Wronski said the centre would also shine a light on locally led health research.

"This funding will create capacity right across northern Queensland by connecting hospital and health services and enabling them to deliver new treatment options, underpinned by research support from JCU.

Research has already commenced with the UPper limb and Language Impairment and Functional Training (UPLIFT) trial, and two further trials are planned for 2025. The UPLIFT trial is testing a new approach to restoring communication, and hand and arm function, in stroke survivors. The UPLIFT project aims to establish whether combining communication therapy with arm and hand therapy, delivered through high intensity training regimes, achieves better results than standard approaches. Townsville University Hospital, ICU and Alliance Rehabilitation have joined forces to deliver the trial in regional Queensland and are testing the new rehabilitation model via both in-clinic and telehealth at-home delivery. The UPLIFT trial will continue until February 2026.

The other two trials planned for this year as part of the Trial Ready Stroke Centre are as follows:

- EXTEND-IA DNase: Improving early reperfusion with adjuvant dornase alfa in large vessel ischemic stroke.
- EXTEND-AGNES TNK: Post-thrombectomy intra-arterial tenecteplase for Acute management of non-retrievable thrombus and no-reflow in Emergent Stroke.



The imperative of capacity building in mental health research cannot be overstated. As mental health challenges continue to evolve, it is crucial that we strengthen the research infrastructure, foster expertise, and promote collaborative efforts across sectors to working collaboratively with our research partners, universities, and individuals to develop a comprehensive strategy and actionable plan. We aim to lay a strong foundation for cultivating future leaders in mental health research. This report documents our ongoing efforts, insights, and strategic vision toward building a robust research ecosystem that can effectively address the mental health needs of our community. Together, through sustained commitment and collaborative action, we can make meaningful progress toward advancing mental health research and improving outcomes for those we serve.

Alice Almeida-Crasto

Service Group Director

Mental Health Service Group

New research projects approved in 2024 - Mental Health Service Group

Principal Investigators	Department	Study Title
Dr Ellie Hollyoak	ATODS	A phase 3 randomised placebo-controlled trial of mirtazapine as a pharmacotherapy for methamphetamine ("ice") dependence The TINA Trial

Research Groups – Mental Health Service Group Advancing Research Capability Across MHSG

The Mental Health Service Group (MHSG) continues to prioritize the development of research capability as a cornerstone of its initiatives. The service group has witnessed significant growth in staff actively engaging in research projects, many of which involve collaborations with James Cook University (JCU) research partners across medicine, psychology, and nursing.

Corianne Richardson, Senior Research Officer for MHSG, was recently appointed Adjunct Senior Research Fellow at the University of New England, commencing in 2025. This prestigious role further strengthens collaborative research opportunities for the MHSG. Corianne has also been instrumental in hosting the MHSG Research Café at Cambridge Street, offering clinical staff a dynamic platform to connect, collaborate, and explore research ideas. While the Research Café has been impactful in past years, 2025 marks a strategic evolution with plans to establish a dedicated research committee and implement clear governance structures to guide the MHSG's strategic research focus.

Throughout 2024, the service group supported staff in developing research questions, proposals, and ethics applications. These efforts have ensured continuity and growth in registrar-led clinical research and audit projects. Corianne has been pivotal in advancing projects across three key service areas in adult community, adult inpatient, and adolescent inpatient services. These projects have seen significant progress, including completed proposals and the development of survey tools aimed at fostering practical, hands-on research experience among clinical staff. Collaboration with Dr Tanya Langtree from JCU's Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Research has further enriched these initiatives.

In 2025, the comprehensive retrospective analysis of coronial recommendations spanning two decades (2002–2024) will be finalized, with the findings now being prepared for write-up. Led by Corianne Richardson and Dr. Tanya Langtree, this extensive review employs thematic analysis to define the key focal areas where service recommendations have been made. It examines evolving trends and explores the impacts and implications of these recommendations on policy, training, and clinical practice. The anticipated outcomes are expected to yield critical insights that will inform safety and quality initiatives and drive enhancements in service audits and practice development to advance mental health care delivery.

Belinda Astridge and Dr Timothy Leow have made significant contributions to published work this year through systematic reviews and meta-analyses addressing key mental health challenges. Dr Timothy Leow's research investigates the impact of mental health conditions on university non-continuation rates and academic performance, as well as the effectiveness of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs in improving mental well-being. Belinda Astridge's MPhil research at JCU explores the prevalence and impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) among youth offenders, offering valuable insights into recidivism risk factors and strategies for protective measures.

Key achievement for our Child and Youth Mental Health Service

Looking ahead, the Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS) is preparing for a critical study in 2025, 'Understanding Leadership and Operational Focus in Clinical Governance: A Time-in-Motion Study of CYMHS.' The project team includes Corianne Richardson as Principal Researcher, supported by Dr Donna Dowling (Director CYMHS) and Ms Lisa Phelan (CAYAS Program Manager). This important research will contribute significant insights into clinical leadership and governance and the role of consultant psychiatrist within CYMHS.

A/Prof Mark Mayhall has made significant contributions to mental health research in child and adolescent psychiatry throughout 2024, with a focus on advancing clinical frameworks and collaborative initiatives. His work on multiaxial classification provides a structured approach for addressing complex cases and enhancing transition planning within mental health services. Dr Mayall was the Principal Investigator at Townsville University Hospital for the international and multisite H-RAP study (High Risk Autoimmune Psychosis study). He continues his involvement in the H-RAP study with ongoing input, reporting, notifications, and document review. A paper is currently being prepared from this project.

The SERTA-funded temporary research coordinator role in CYMHS has delivered notable success. Becky Stripp, Clinical Research Coordinator and Senior Psychologist has been working to establish networks and attends the AHHP meetings and supports staff in the CYMHS area aimed at enhancing research capabilities within teams. Several projects are currently in development, including a detailed audit of patients accessing CYMHS services for eating disorders over the past five years. The SERTA-funded position has highlighted the immense value of research-focused roles, and CYMHS is actively exploring ways to sustain and expand its research initiatives into 2025 and beyond.

Progress in Doctoral Research

MHSG staff have excelled in doctoral research across key areas, including workforce dynamics, dietary interventions, and stroke rehabilitation. Their pioneering work produces translatable findings with significant implications for enhancing mental health, strengthening resilience, and improving overall quality of life.

Researcher	Research Title/Project	Research Focus and Key Details	Status/Timeline
Corianne Richardson	Exploring Coaching for Nurses in Mental Health Settings: A Case Study	Investigates the transformative effects of coaching in mental health settings over a 6 month intervention. Her study examines how coaching impacts nurses' retention intentions, professional identity development, adoption of high involvement work practices, and resilience building. Additionally, three papers have been prepared for publication this year: a concept analysis defining coaching in nursing, an exploration of outcomes from a 2 day coaching workshop for clinical nurses, and a discussion on the interplay between coaching, clinical supervision, and reflective practice in mental health nursing.	Data collection is complete; final analysis is underway; thesis is in the final stages. Additionally, three are now ready for submission for publication.

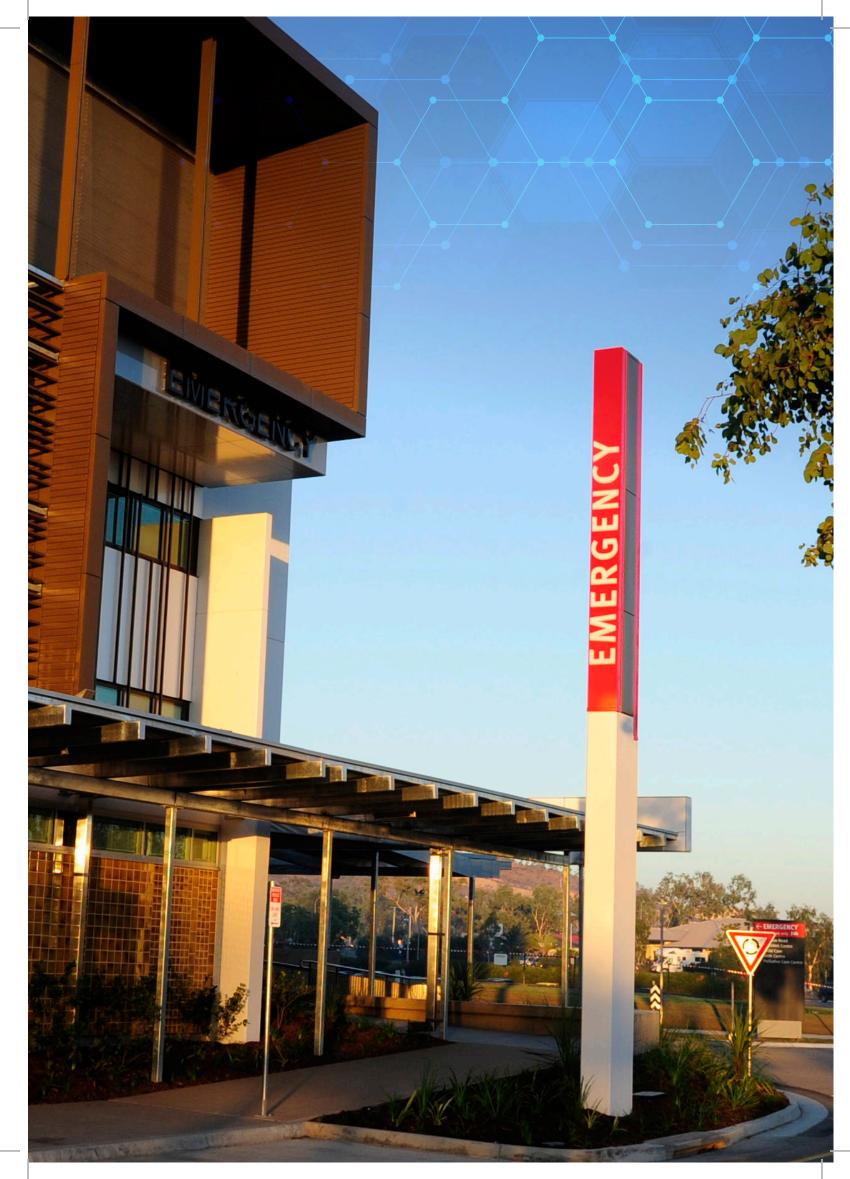
Researcher	Research Title/Project	Research Focus and Key Details	Status/Timeline
A/Prof Carlo Longhitano	North Queensland Dietary Intervention Trial (NQDIT)	Conducting a randomized clinical trial in Townsville, Australia, to compare a Modified Ketogenic Diet to a control diet—aligned with the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating—for 100 community based patients with bipolar disorder or schizophrenia spectrum disorders. Supervised by Professor Zoltan Sarnyai, the study assesses the efficacy and feasibility of the diet in addressing underlying bioenergetic dysfunctions while improving metabolic health. Early evidence suggests promise for this innovative dietary approach.	Data collection is complete; analysis is underway; dissertation drafting is in progress, with final results expected by mid 2025.
Ben Freedman	Relationship Between Workplace Incivility and Patient Safety	Examines the prevalence of incivility in hospital settings and its detrimental impact on patient safety culture (PSC). Through a systematic review and meta analysis, his research quantifies incivility's negative effects and underscores the need for targeted interventions to enhance safety culture and overall quality of care.	Data collection is complete; final analysis is in progress; thesis is nearing completion.
Nerida Firth	Use of Medications to Enhance Recovery Following a Stroke	Nerida Firth's doctoral research investigates the use of medications to enhance recovery following a stroke by examining stroke survivors' perspectives on recovery-promoting drugs (RPDs). With a focus group study and a discrete choice experiment pilot study completed, she is now preparing to submit her thesis. Her work explores stroke survivors' perspectives on recovery-promoting drugs, and the associated risks, costs and inconveniences they are prepared to tolerate to achieve increased functional recovery. Nerida's research provides a foundation for future studies that investigate the design of more personcentred RPD clinical trials that align with stroke survivors' preferences, potentially enhancing intervention adherence, which may ultimately lead to a) increased trial fidelity and b) RPD interventions that are more tolerable and acceptable to stroke survivors.	Group discussions are complete; the thesis is finalized and ready for submission

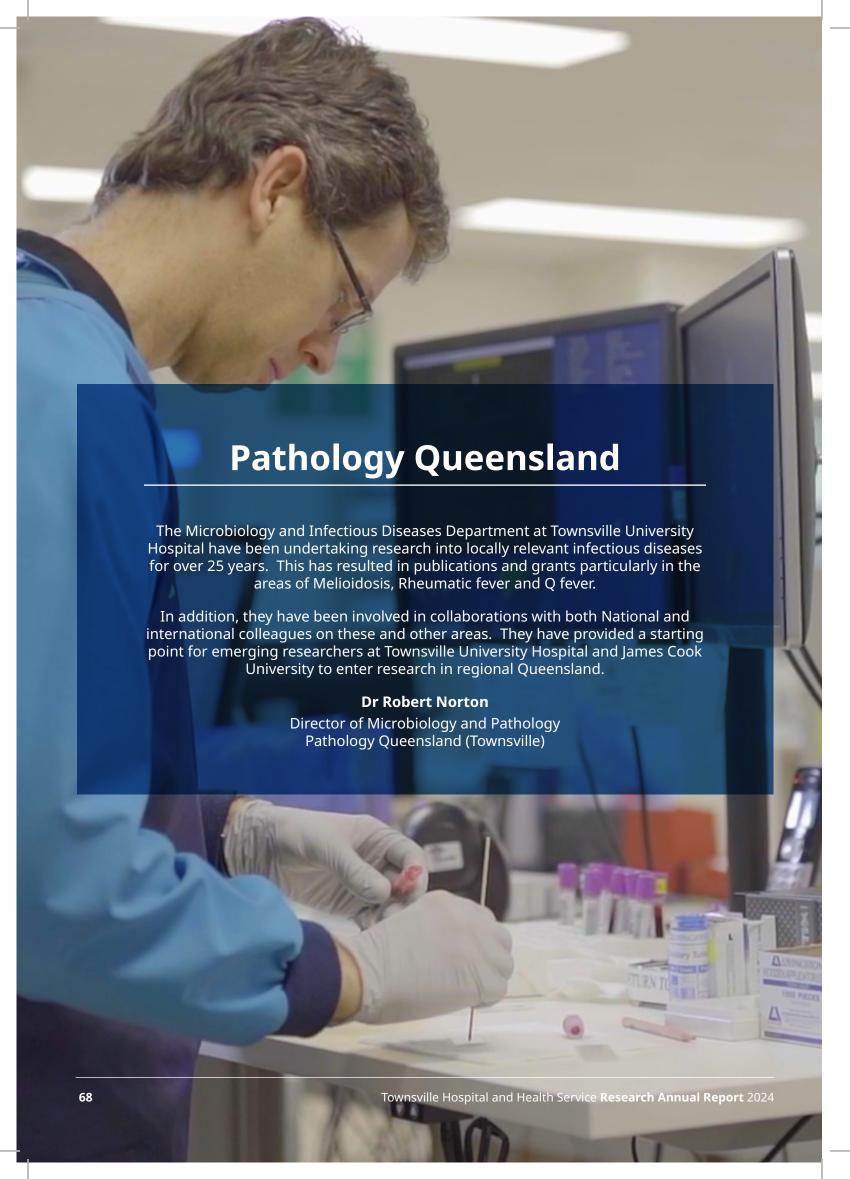
Key Researchers

Name	Role
Corianne Richardson	CNC/Senior Research Officer/Adjunct Senior Research Fellow (UNE)
Dr Carlo Longhitano	Associate Professor of Psychiatry/Psychiatrist Court Liaison Service
Dr Mark Mayall	Associate Professor Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Becky Stripp	CYMHS Research Coordinator (SERTA Project)/Senior Psychologist CYMHS
Dr Timothy Leow	Consultant Psychiatrist
Dr Raja Sadhu	Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Dr Hiranya Wijesundara	Consultant Psychiatrist
Nerida Firth	ATODS Pharmacist

Key Collaborators

Collaborator	Project
Corianne Richardson (MHSG) & Dr Tanya Langtree (JCU)	Collaboration on community mental health nursing competency framework. Assessing Competency and its Impact on Job Stress and Resilience in Community Mental Health Nurses: A Participatory Mixed Methods Study.
A/Prof Mark Mayall (MHSG)	Collaboration with the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW, focusing on clinical trial research within Alcohol and Other Drug Services.
Nerida Firth (MHSG)	Collaborative research on stroke recovery with partners from Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney, Menzies School of Health Research, University of Melbourne, Florey Institute, NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence in Stroke Rehabilitation and Brain Recovery, and James Cook University.
Dr Timothy Leow (MHSG)	Research on public humiliation's psychological effects, MBSR program effectiveness, and university non-continuation rates.
A/Prof Carlo Longhitano (MHSG)/ Professor Zoltan Sarnyai (JCU)	Investigator for the North Queensland Dietary Intervention Trial (NQDIT), examining ketogenic metabolic therapy for patients with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.





Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Research Group

The THHS team's research focus in 2024 has included:

- Melioidosis Diagnostics, Relationship to climate events, Epidemiology in this region
- Q fever immune responses
- Rheumatic fever neurobehavioral effects

The Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Research Group, had an active year in 2024, delivering:

- Peer reviewed Publications 6; and
- Collaborations with the University of New England, and James Cook University leading to a successful NHMRC Ideas Grant, led by Associate Professor Jeff Warner (JCU) for \$1,505,250 to support the project Melioidosis on the move: Informing the public health response.

Key Researchers

- Robert Norton
- Christopher Heather



Melioidosis is an infectious disease caused by the soil organism Burkholderia pseudomallei. While endemic in tropical regions such as South East Asia, it is also found in the environment in Northern Australia including the area around Townsville. It causes a variety of disease manifestations and is commonly acquired by inhalation or wound inoculation. Disease often follows periods of heavy rain and cyclonic events. It has a mortality that is significant at between 10-15% and preferentially affects diabetics, those with an excess alcohol intake and the immunosuppressed.

Research on this locally important disease in Townsville, began in 1962. The then Director of Pathology at Townsville Hospital, Dr Ron Rimington, described the first cases of human melioidosis in Australia that had been diagnosed at the Townsville Hospital laboratory.

This work was continued in the 1980s by the then Director of Microbiology, Dr Les Ashdown. He developed a critical agar (Ashdown's agar) that is now widely accepted as the most effective method of isolating Burkholderia pseudomallei from predominantly mixed cultures as is found in sputum and urine. He is also credited with developing a serological assay for melioidosis which is still in use today. He also published the first assessment of the prevalence of human melioidosis in North Queensland.

From the mid 1990's to the present, this locally relevant research , has been continued. This has involved a variety of laboratory staff, doctors and research scientists. There have been and continue to be collaborations locally with James Cook University, University of Queensland and The Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin. International collaborations have been with researchers in Thailand, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) , Atlanta, USA, Universities of Hawaii, Northern Arizona and Florida. This wide collaborative network has resulted in over 40 publications in peer reviewed journals and 2 international guidelines for the diagnosis and susceptibility testing of this organism.

Research done at the Townsville University Hospital Pathology Queensland laboratory, has focused upon the following:

Identification of the organism:

This can be problematic for laboratories unfamiliar with this organism. We have shown that a few simple laboratory tests can help to identify this organism to a 95% specificity. We have also shown that mass spectrometry (MALDI-TOF) can be used for identification and have been instrumental in getting the spectra included in the database.

Susceptibility testing:

We have collaborated with the international organisation EUCAST (European Committee on Antimicrobial susceptibility testing) to develop standards for this organism which would be of benefit to low income countries where this disease is prevalent. We have also tested this organism against a variety of new and emerging antibiotics.

Serology:

Our laboratory has facilitated the establishment of a common Quality assurance program for melioidosis serology, among the 3 Australian laboratories which perform this test. This ensures reproducibility of results.

Clinical and Epidemiologic factors:

We have described the distribution, clinical presentations and outcomes of up to 300 patients with the disease in the region.

Weather events and Disease:

We have demonstrated that disease outbreaks will occur in the Townsville region when >200mm of rain falls in the preceding 2 weeks.

Sequencing and relatedness:

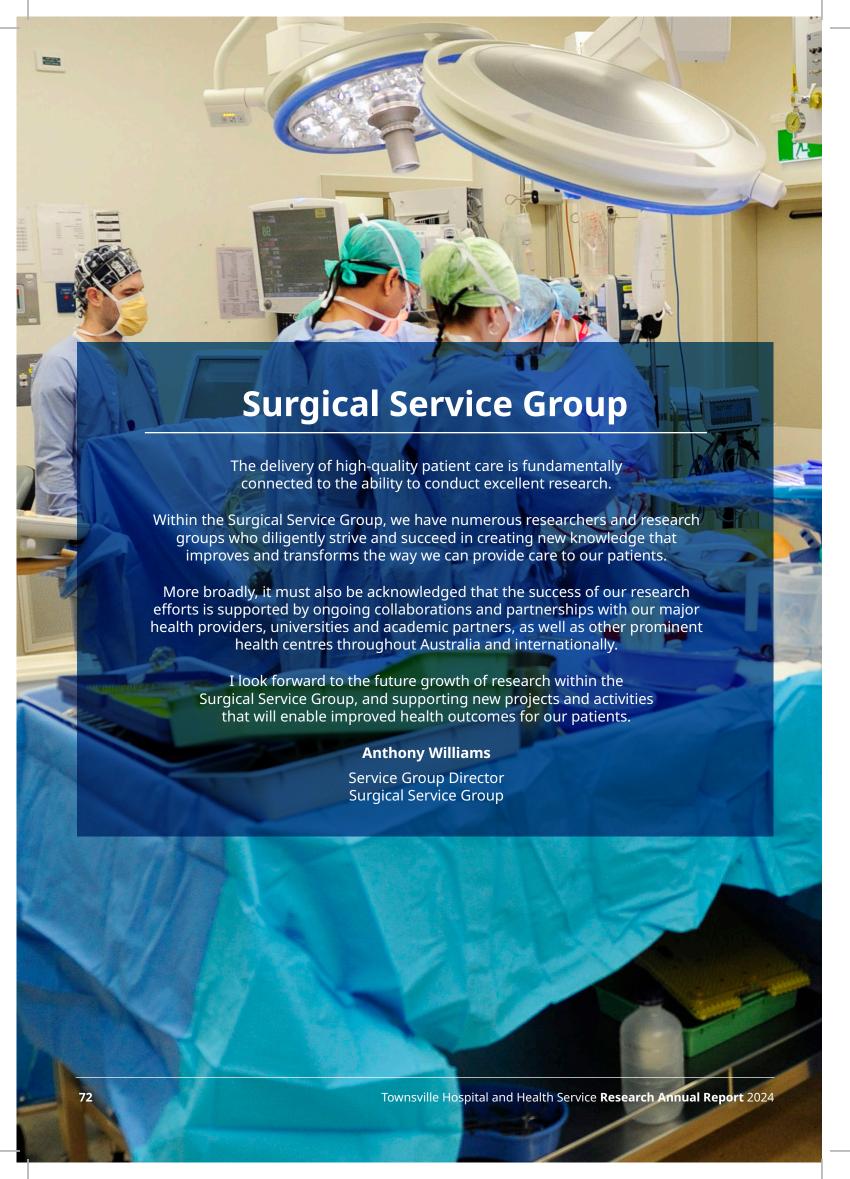
Isolates from the Townsville region have been sequenced and typed. In accordance with isolates found in other regions of Australia and internationally, there is wide heterogeneity with little relatedness within outbreaks. This would suggest that there are widespread recombination events within the organism.

Laboratory safety:

The organism is considered a Tier1 organism in the United States of America and is deemed there to be an agent of bioterrorism. As such, the safety of our laboratory staff when handling the organism is paramount. We have demonstrated that laboratory transmission in our laboratory at Townsville has not occurred. This is despite the handling of the organism in the laboratory for well over 30 years.

The Pathology Queensland Laboratory at Townsville University Hospital has been designated the Queensland State Reference laboratory for Melioidosis. Numerous Queensland Health staff have been involved in ensuring that the laboratory diagnosis of this locally important disease is continued to the high standards as has occurred. We are fortunate to have such staff.

Dr Robert Norton April 2025



New research projects approved in 2024 – Surgical Service Group

Principal Investigators	Department	Study Title
Dr Sorcha Evans	Anaesthesia	Retrospective cohort study of outcomes for babies having hernia surgery at multiple ANZ hospitals
Dr Lucy Dunstan	Emergency Intensive Care Unit	A phase III RCT evaluating Fibrinogen Concentrate compared to Cryoprecipitate in severely injured bleeding adult trauma patients with hypofibrinogenaemia: FEISTY II
Dr Kyle Crowley	General Surgery	The Compliance of pre-operative HbA1C Optimisation in elective Abdominal hernia surgery: CoCOA audit
Mr David Hinds	Cardiology Cardiac Catheter Laboratory	Co-designing and developing a same-day discharge guideline for patients undergoing elective percutaneous coronary intervention: Same-day PCI study
Dr David Mackintosh	Respiratory and Sleep Unit Intensive Care Unit Emergency Department	Monitoring efficacy of non-invasive ventilation using continuous transcutaneous carbon dioxide (TcCO2) versus intermittent arterial carbon dioxide (PaCO2) in acute hypercapnic respiratory failure (AHRF): A pilot study.: CO2MAN
Dr Stephen Whebell	Intensive Care Unit Research Data Lab	Development of a research-oriented platform for collecting high frequency mechanical ventilator waveform data
Dr Joanna Longley	Intensive Care Unit	The Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society - Patient Reported Outcome and Experience Measures: ANZICS- PROEMs
Dr Priya Sreedharan	Anaesthesia	POPSICLE:Postoperative pain study in children- a longitudinal evaluation
Mr Vikrant Kalke	Research Data Lab Intensive Care Unit	QLD Sepsis Algorithm Prospective Validation
Dr David Anderson	Neurosurgery	Retrospective review of intracranial abscess/empyema in paediatric patients in Queensland
Dr Sadhish Shanmugam	Anaesthesia	ACORN: Anaesthesia Consumer Research Network. Research priorities for paediatric anaesthesia and perioperative medicine In Australia
Dr Anudeep Gupta	Cardiology	A Phase 3, Randomised, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Study to Investigate the Effect of Lepodisiran on the reduction of Major adverse Cardiovascular Events in adults with elevated Lipoprotein (a) who have Established Atherosclerotic cardiovascular Disease or Are At Risk for a First Cardiovascular Event: ACCLAIM-Lp9(a)
Dr Jolyn Khoo	Neurosurgery	Contemporary learning curve for Microsurgical Clipping of intracranial aneurysms by neurosurgical trainees
Dr Mike Wu	Edovascular and Vascular	Secondary intervention for endoleak and graft failure in the AVA 2010-2022
Dr Sananta Dash	Intensive Care Unit	Exploring the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people having cardiac surgery and participating in medical research.
Dr Kelvin Robertson	Pharmacy Cardiology	REducing hospital readmissions for high-risk CARDiology patients (RECARD): clinician experiences and expectations of transition of care services: RECARD qualitative study
Dr Anudeep Gupta	Cardiology	Effects of ziltivekimab versus placebo on cardiovascular outcomes in patients with acute myocardial infarction (ARTEMIS)

Principal Investigators	Department	Study Title
A/Prof Bobby John	Cardiology Services	POlysaccharide haemostat for WounD haEmatomas Reduction in Cardiac Implantable Electronic Devices procedures -The POWDERCIED RCT Study
Dr Matthew Lam	Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery (ENT surgery)	Simulation training for upskilling South Pacific surgeons in ENT emergencies
Mrs Sonja Schonfeldt-Roy	Physiotherapy Intensive Care Unit	Inspire Beyond ICU – An audit of usual care physiotherapy in Australian and New Zealand ICUs
Ms Felicity Dick	Dietetics Intensive Care	Nutrition practice in critically ill adults - an observational study: NUTRIENT
Dr Nicole Hawkins	General Surgery	Barriers to junior doctors undertaking surgical research in a regional setting
Bede Ashley	North Queensland Persistent Pain Management Service (NQPPMS)	Implementation of a clinician-led, immersive pain education program using Virtual Reality: a state-wide evaluation
Dr Udaya Ponangi	Cardiology	Effects of ziltivekimab versus placebo on morbidity and mortality in patients with heart failure with mildly reduced or preserved ejection fraction and systemic inflammation: HERMES
Dr Stephan Roehr	Hyperbaric Medicine Unit	Decompression Illness Registry: DCI Registry
Dr Ilamurugu Kaliaperumal	Anaesthetics	Australia and New Zealand Emergency Laparotomy Audit - Quality Improvement
Dr Siva Senthuran	Intensive Care Unit	Outcomes of SGLT-2 inhibitor induced euglycaemic diabetic ketoacidosis in North Queensland intensive care units: a retrospective cohort study.
Dr Stephen Whebell	Intensive Care Unit Research	Sample sub-group algorithm bias analysis for machine learning evaluation in the clinical domain

Research Groups – Surgical Service Group Queensland Research Centre for Peripheral Vascular Disease

The QRCPVD has continued its active program of research, trials and publication. Important developments during this reporting period include:

- Publication of the key findings that our brief behavioural counselling by allied health
 professionals to promote physical activity reduced the risk of major adverse cardiovascular
 events in people with peripheral arterial disease in the top surgical journal JAMA Surgery
 identifying a counselling approach that improves quality of life and reduces risk of cardiovascular
 events in people with blocked leg arteries;
- Substantial progress of the OPTIMAL trial designed to test a telehealth secondary prevention program for peripheral artery disease with recruitment of approximately 50% of the required sample size;
- Continuation of the Metformin Aneurysm Trial with now 18 sites across Australia and New Zealand and negotiation underway to commence in the UK early next year;
- Over 70 publications during 2024-5 alone;
- Successful NHMRC synergy for research testing novel aortic aneurysm drugs;
- Successful NHMRC Investigators grant focused on novel models of care for peripheral artery disease;
- Unique studies on the burden and nature of peripheral artery disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (e.g., Eur J Vasc Endovasc Surg 2023; 66(2): 237-44);
- Completion and award of a Cum Laude PhD on the burden of diabetes-related foot disease by Chanika Alahakoon under primary supervision by Professor Golledge.
- Multiple national and international presentations including an invited Keynote presentation at the leading worldwide aortic aneurysm meeting in Liege (IMAD 2024).

Key Researchers

- Professor Jonathan Golledge Chief Principal Investigator/Director
- Associate Professor Joseph Moxon Statistician/Associate Dean, Research (JCU)
- · Ms Alkira Deren Clinical Research Officer
- Dr Awais Farid
- Ms Kyla Tribe
- Dr Rene Jaggi Global Project Manager
- Ms Ashleigh Gunn Research Exercise Physiologist
- Dr Shiv Thanigaimani Post Doctoral Research Scientist
- Mrs Sandra Burrows Research Administration Project Officer
- Dr Annabelle Kavanagh Senior Clinical Research Worker
- · Ms Ratnesh Gilhotra Clinical Trial Coordinator
- Mr Cedric Hensman Systems Database Officer
- Mrs Glenys Standley Clinical Research Worker
- Dr Kristen Barratt Post Doctoral Research Scientist
- Ms Kate West Research Exercise Physiologist

PhD students

- Tharindika Madiwila Gamarachchige
- Cynthia Wen
- Diana Thomas

Key Collaborators

College of Medicine & Dentistry, James Cook University

AMP-activated protein kinase (AMPK) project:

• St Vincent's Research Institute (Jonathan Oakhill and Sandra Garlic)

Metformin Aneurysm Trial (MAT) project:

- University of Otago (Greg Jones)
- University of Leicester (Matt Bown)
- The George Institute for Global Health (Bruce Neal)

Diabetes-related foot disease:

- La Trobe University (Byron Perrin)
- QUT (Pete Lazzarini)
- University of Newcastle (Viv Chuter)
- Baylor College of Medicine (Bijan Najafi)
- University of Southern California (David Armstrong)
- Amsterdam UMC (Jaap Van Netten)

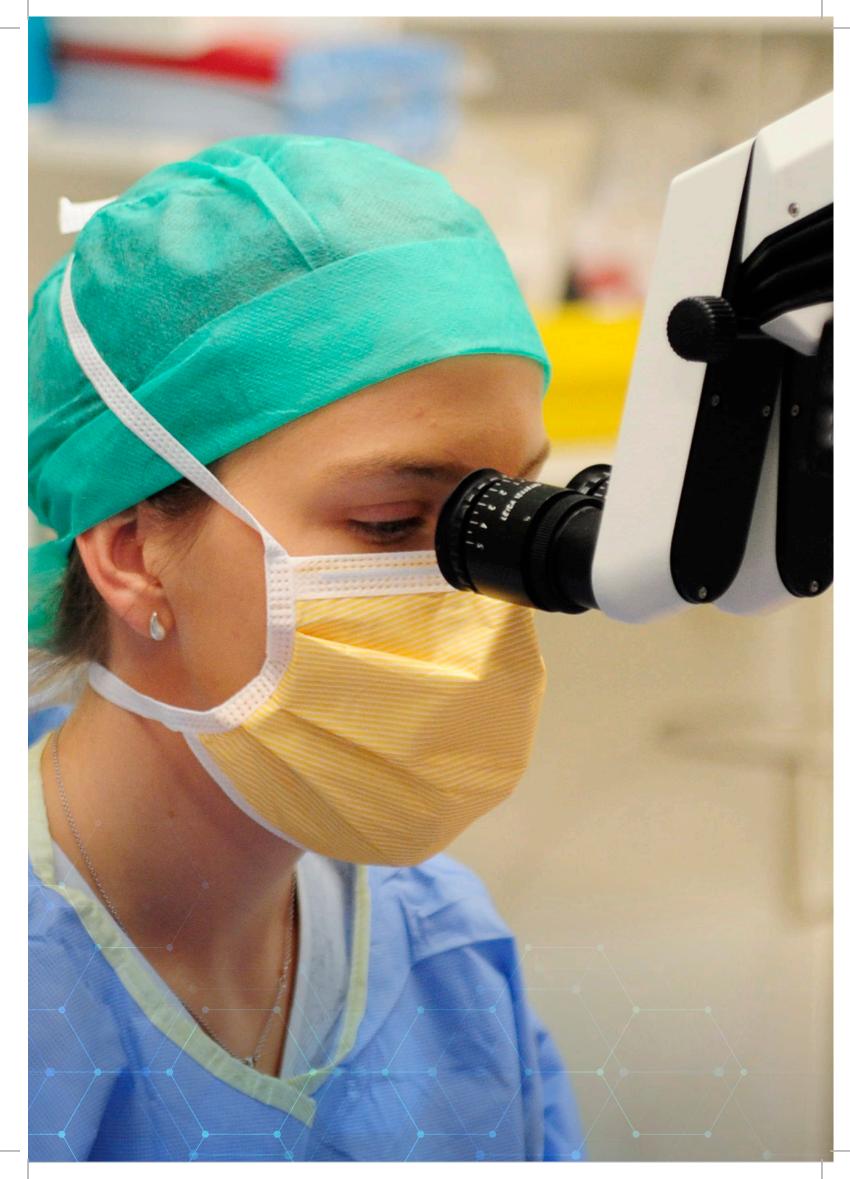
Conference Presentations / Papers

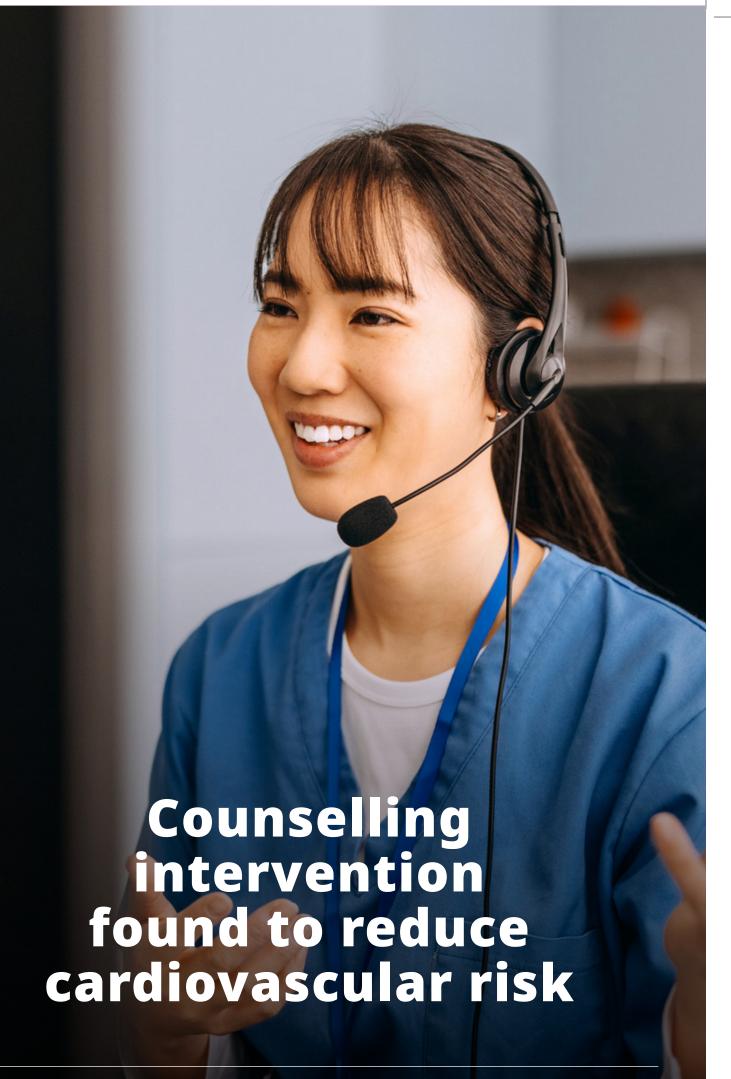
IMAD 24 MicroRNAs and AAA – Keynote Speaker June 2024

Phillipines Vascular Society in October The good, bad and ugly of a Clinician-Research career - Keynote Speaker October 2024

Sydney Vascular Meeting August PAD trials - Keynote Speaker August 2024

Academy of Health and Medical Science September Regional Clinician Scientist - Keynote Speaker September 2024





A counselling intervention designed to increase walking amongst patients with peripheral artery disease (PAD) has been found to significantly reduce the risk of patients suffering a major adverse cardiovascular event (MACE), but not in the way the research team had expected.

Walking is acknowledged as an important measure to prevent cardiovascular events for patients with PAD (blocked leg arteries). Patients who record the shortest walking distances tend to have the highest risk of MACE including myocardial infarction, stroke and cardiovascular death. Given this, the research team sought to implement a counselling program aimed at increasing walking amongst PAD patients.

However, contrary to what the research team expected, the counselling intervention had no significant impact on increasing the number of steps walked or reducing sedentary behaviour. Where it did appear to have impact was on quality-of-life measures including reducing anxiety and depression, and improving participants' sense of acceptance and capacity to adapt to their condition.

The study, a randomised clinical trial, was led by THHS and JCU Professor Jonathan Golledge and his team at the Queensland Research Centre for Peripheral Vascular Disease and involved 200 participants across three Australian cities - Brisbane, Sydney and Townsville. The trial intervention was aimed at determining whether a brief program of counselling which sought to encourage participants to complete three 40-minute walking sessions per week could reduce their risk of having a MACE.

All participants in the trial received four brief counselling sessions. The intervention group received two 1-hour face-to-face sessions followed by two 15-minute telephone sessions over a 12-week period. The control group received phone contacts at the same time points as the intervention group. Both the intervention and control sessions were delivered by allied health professionals who had been specifically trained and supported in the counselling protocol. Participants' physical and mental health was monitored, and participants were followed up over a period of 8 years.

The intervention, based on the 5A Behavioral Counseling Framework covered topics including: the participants' knowledge about PAD, the role of exercise, and the barriers and enablers for walking;

- advice about the benefits of walking;
- reaching collaborative agreement towards walking three 40-minute sessions per week; and
- assistance with action plans, self-regulation, outcome expectations, self-monitoring, social support and problem-solving.

In contrast, the contacts with control group participants involved:

- open-ended questions about symptoms and general health;
- empathic, non-specific responses, but no advice was provided on exercise or physical activity.

Remarkably, while the intervention resulted in no difference to physical activity, the improvement in the quality of life and mental health of the participants within the intervention group was associated with their risk of having a MACE reducing to less than half the rate of participants in the control group. Overall, 10 of the 102 (9.8%) participants allocated to the intervention had a MACE compared with 21 of the 98 (21.4%) participants allocated to control.

High markers of depression, anxiety, anger and stress have been associated with greater risk of MACE in people with coronary heart disease, and counselling programs have been found to improve mental health of people with hypertension. It is the view of the research team that the intervention that they delivered assisted participants to better understand and self-manage the challenges of exercising with ischemic leg pain, which led to more acceptance of their condition, reduced psychological distress and less perceived physical disability and pain.

Professor Golledge believes this to be the first randomised clinical trial that showed a physical activity counselling intervention was associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular events.

The team is now combining the counselling approach with tele-health exercise sessions with the aim of improving walking as well as quality-of-life – a powerful combination that has the potential to significantly reduce the risk of cardiovascular events.

Traditionally, management of limb PAD is regarded as a surgical matter, but surgery creates its own risks. For example, for non-limb threatening ischemia, surgical intervention is more likely to lead to progress to amputation. What is needed is to expand the range of interventions that we offer to PAD patients including counselling, exercise and better risk-factor management, and empower patients so that they are better able to self-manage and feel that they have more control over their health.

The findings from this study have potential application for patients with a wide variety of diseases and health complications. Through brief targeted counselling interventions such as this, we may have the potential to improve patients' quality of life and health outcomes and reduce the need to deliver more complex and costly clinical interventions.

Orthopaedic Research Institute of Queensland (ORIQL)

The Orthopaedic Research Institute of Queensland (ORIQL) is a registered health promotion charity focused on researching and treating musculoskeletal diseases. Established in 2013, ORIQL is dedicated to improving clinical outcomes for patients, particularly in regional areas of Queensland. Through partnerships with organizations such as Townsville University Hospital, James Cook University (JCU), Mater Hospital, and the University of Tasmania (UTAS), as well as various industry collaborators, ORIQL aims to develop research and treatment strategies that enhance patient access and benefit.

The Institute offers two surgical fellowships designed to help surgeons advance their skills and knowledge through research and practical clinical experience. Notably, two previous fellows have successfully completed PhDs while at ORIQL, reflecting the Institute's commitment to advancing orthopaedic knowledge and expertise.

ORIQL also provides research opportunities for both accredited and non-accredited trainees, enabling them to engage in collaborative orthopaedic research. This involvement allows trainees to contribute to essential projects, gain invaluable experience, and enhance musculoskeletal health outcomes for patients in the region.

Our team is actively working on furthering our research specific to the field of upper and lower limb arthroplasty; the current pipeline of research highlights projects utilising technology to assist with important crucial planning, execution and evaluation of surgical procedures. Together, these studies focus on enhancing surgical techniques and patient care. Stay tuned for these upcoming publications as we continue our commitment to excellence in orthopaedic research!

Key Researchers

- · Associate Professor Matthew Wilkinson Chair, Director
- Associate Professor Peter McEwen, Director
- Associate Professor Kaushik Hazratwala, Director
- Dr Levi Morse,
- Dr Andrew Stillwell
- Dr Benjamin Parkinson,
- Associate Professor Michael Boland
- Dr Peter Riddlestone
- Dr Jonathan DeHoog
- Dr Pamela Boekel
- Dr Brent Matthews
- Dr Constantin Dlaska
- Dr William O'Callaghan
- Dr Scott LeRossignol
- Dr Kenji Doma
- · Dr Petros Ismailidis
- Dr Finlay Cusack (Research Associate)
- Dr Isaac Ong (Research Associate)
- Dr Siobhan Cotter (
- Dr Rupert Vickary Watts
- Mrs Andrea Grant, Clinical Research Coordinator

Key Collaborators

- Dr Peter McEwen collaborated with James Cook University Heart Trauma Sepsis Laboratory (Prof Geoffrey Dobson, Dr Hayley Letson, Dr Jodie Morris)
- Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine, James Cook University
- Associate Professor Sergio Barroso-Rosa, University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; Dr Petros Ismailidis Basel University
- University of Tasmania

Event	Title	Presenter	Co-Authors
SESA Biennial conference	The efficacy of topical preparations in reducing the incidence of Cutibacterium Acnes at the start and conclusion of TSA: A randomized controlled trial	Dr Levi Morse	Matt Wilkinson, Andrea Grant, Tristin Simmonds, Kenji Doma
SESA Biennial conference	Clinical and radiographic outcomes for RTSR with glenoid bone grafting – A retrospective	Fin Cusack	Levi Morse, Peter Riddlestone, Finley Cusack
SESA Biennial conference	The effect of subscapularis repair on clinical outcomes in reverse total shoulder arthroplasty at a minimum of 2 years	Isaac Ong	Levi Morse, Isaac Ong, Kennan Burrows, Andrea Grant, Scott Lerossignol
SESA Biennial Conference	Accuracy of mixed reality enhanced glenoid prosthesis positioning for reverse total shoulder arthroplasty: a proposed randomized controlled trial (E-Poster, supervising author)	Pam Boekel	Levi Morse, Pam Boekel, Andrea Grant
SESA Biennial Conference	Early radiographic loosening of stemless total shoulder replacements: A retrospective case control study with 2- year results (E Poster; supervising author)	Fin Cusack	Levi Morse, Pam Boekel, Andrea Grant, Kenji Doma
Royal North Shore Symposium	How I select patients for rotator cuff repair surgery	Levi Morse	
AOA COE	Invited Lecture: Prosthetic Design, Does it matter?	Peter McEwen	
Zimmer Biomet Master Class	Enhanced Recovery after Total Knee Arthroplasty	Peter McEwe	
Zimmer Biomet Master Class	Patient Engagement Utilising Digital Platforms	Peter McEwen	
Royal North Shore Shoulder Symposium	Biceps tenodesis – the move away from unicoritcal fixation to bicortical with interference	Levi Morse	
Korean Arthroscopy Society international congress meeting	Shoulder block study	Matt Wilkinson	Levi Morse, Pam Boekel, Andrea Grant, Kenji Doma, Sarah Brereton
SESA	Travelling fellowship report for South Korea	Matt Wilkinson	
AOA ASM, Brisbane	How I prevent infection in total knee arthroplasty	Peter McEwen	
AOA ASM, Brisbane	Association between knee compartment laxity and post operative gait quality and quantity	Peter McEwen	
AOA ASM, Brisbane	Using the stressed HKA for alignment in varus knees shows signs of improved early recovery	Peter McEwen	
AOA ASM, Brisbane	Posterior tibial slope correction and revision ACL surgery	Peter McEwen	

Event	Title	Presenter	Co-Authors
AOA ASM, Brisbane	Posterior tibial slope and failed ACL reconstruction	Peter McEwen	Levi Morse, Peter Riddleston, Andrea Grant
AOA ASM	Poster presentation – glenoid accuracy	Fin Cusack	
ISAKOS IKAF, Kyoto	How I plan and execute a total knee replacement with a focus on alignment	Peter McEwen	
ISAKOS IKAF, Kyoto	How far can we except lateral laxity in a total knee replacement	Peter McEwen	
ISAKOS IKAF, Kyoto	Battle of the robots: Rosa	Peter McEwen	Levi Morse, Matthew Gilberd, Andrea Grant
SESA	Outcomes of reverse total shoulder arthroplasty with or without bone graft – a retrospective matched case control study	Pam Boekel	Scott Lerossignol, Andrea Grant, Levi Morse
SESA	Poster: Early radiographic loosening f stemless reverse total shoulder replacements: a retrospective case control study with 2-year results	Pam Boekel	Andrea Grant, Levi Morse, Kenji Doma
SESA	Poster: Accuracy of mixed reality enhanced glenoid prosthesis position for reverse total shoulder arthroplasty: a proposed randomized controlled trial	Pam Boekel	
Hunter Meeting	Multiligatment Knee Injuries	Peter McEwen	
Hunter Meeting	Enhanced recovery after surgery	Peter McEwen	
Hunter Meeting	Prosthetic Design and Kinematics: Does it matter?	Peter McEwen	

Dr McEwen contributed to a book chapter, 'Fast Track Surgery in Hip and Knee Arthroplasty' (Springer publication)

Critical Care Research Group

The Critical Care Research Group was involved in the following studies in 2024-2025: Multi-centre International Projects:

- 1. ANZ PARK-PICU study, Prevalence of Acute Rehab for Kids in the PICU
- 2. KIDS THRIVE project
- 3. RAPIDS project
- 4. FEISTY Junior
- 5. PROMPT BOLUS (via PREDICT network)
- 6. CLIP II study
- 7. PREDICT TBI Study
- 8. NOTACS study

Key Researchers

- Siva Senthuran
- Arjun Chavan
- Sananta Dash
- April Win
- Stephen Whebell
- Lachlan Quick
- Jonna Longley
- Sutrisno Gunawan
- Soon Teoh

Key Collaborators

Collaborator	Research projects in Intensive Care Unit (Adult) at TUH Ongoing Multicentre Trials
Jamieson Trauma Institute and UQ RBWH CSIRO,	PREDICT TBI - a multi centre MRFF funded study being run from the Jamieson Trauma Institute and UQ (with Dr Siva Senthuran as the PI). The study aims to develop a prognostic model for traumatic brain injury patients using novel biomarkers and MRI imaging at various time points after the injury. The study funds a 0.5FTE research coordinator position which enables us screen and recruit patients.
ANZICS Research Centre RBWH	CLIP II This study being run from the ANZICS Research Centre in Melbourne (with Dr April Win as PI) aims to compare the suitability of frozen platelets against conventional liquid platelets in the treatment of bleeding after cardiac surgery. If the study shows equivalence, patients in remote locations who are bleeding can be treated with thawed frozen platelets which would normally not be available there. Dr Win and her team have been recognised nationally as the second highest recruiting centre for the study at the ANZICS CTG meeting in Noosa in March 2023. They have also been invited to Melbourne to share their experiences in running the study. The team presented 'TUH site experience' at the Trial Results Meeting in September 2023.
Fiona Stanley Hospital Perth The George Institute Sydney	The NOTACS study (Dr Sananta Dash as PI) seeks to explore the impact of nasal high flow oxygen in preventing pulmonary complications after cardiac surgery. A substudy is upskilling an Indigenous research assistant and aims to explore the themes of 'consent' and 'home' amongst Indigenous patients undergoing cardiac surgery. This study is about to commence having received approvals. This study is also funded through the MRFF.
Fiona Stanley Hospital Perth The George Institute Sydney	The CONSENT Study: A substudy is upskilling an Indigenous research assistant and aims to explore the themes of 'consent' and 'home' amongst Indigenous patients undergoing cardiac surgery. This study is also funded through the MRFF.
John Hunter Hospital	REACT Shock RCT: This is a MRCT that looks at the effect of individualised blood pressure targets versus standard care among critically ill patients with shock. This is a MRFF funded trial. The CI for this trial is A/Prof Rakshit Panwar (John Hunter Hospital) and the PI is Dr Sananta Dash
ANZICS (The Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society)	ANZICS-PROEMs: The Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society - Patient Reported Outcome and Experience Measures (ANZICS-PROEMs) Pilot Feasibility Study- This is multicentre pilot study conduced by the ANZICS looking at feasibility of measuring outcomes and experiences of patients admitted to ICU. The CI for the study is Prof David Pilcher and the PI is Dr Joanna Longley

Collaborator	Research projects in Intensive Care Unit (Adult) at TUH Ongoing Multicentre Trials
ANZICS (The Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society)	ARISE Fluids: This is an ANZICS CTG multicentre study (Chief Investigator Prof Sandra Peake, QE2 hospital, Adelaide and PI is Dr Emma Wawn in Emergency Dept & AI is Dr Siva Senthuran in ICU) that aims to compare the effect of a strategy of restricted fluids and early introduction of vasopressors to a strategy which involves a larger initial volume of intravenous fluid and later vasopressor administration if required, for haemodynamic resuscitation of patients with early septic shock.
ANZICS Research Centre	EXCEL: The EXCEL Study is a prospective observational national clinical registry. The aim is to generate a national multidisciplinary network of integrated care for patients suffering acute cardiac or respiratory failure or cardiac arrest requiring extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) to monitor long term outcomes and identify best practice. CI: Prof Carol Hodgson Local PI: Dr April Win
Associate Professor Neal W Pollock, Department of Kinesiology, Faculty of Medicine Université Laval, Québec, QC, Canada	DCIEM dive computer algorithm field monitoring project: Drs Sutrisno Gunawan (Principal investigator-TUH ICU), Denise Blake (TUH ED/Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine) and Associate Professor Neal W Pollock conducted a field investigation of the risk of venous gas embolism and decompression sickness of the novel DCIEM algorithm installed in a dive computer
Queensland Critical Care Research Network	QLINK-ICU: Development of a highly granular, multisource, linked dataset for all Queensland Intensive Care Units using an electronic medical record. CPI: Dr Kyle White, local PI: Dr Stephen Whebell
Clinical Excellence Queensland	Queensland Adult Digical Sepsis Algorithm Prospective Validation Using Real Time Data: Validation of a developed AI/machine learning model predicting sepsis using live electronic health record data. CPI: Prof Ian Scott. Local PI: Dr Stephen Whebell. Other TUH investigators include Dr Luke Lawton and Mr Rudolf Schnetler.

Upcoming Studies

Collaborator	Study name
ANZICS	SODA-BIC Study: SODium BICarbonate for Metabolic Acidosis in the Intensive Care Unit (SODa-BIC): A multicentre, randomised, double-blind clinical trial
The George Institute	FLASH Study: A prospective, blinded, randomised clinical trial of fludrocortisone compared with placebo in critically ill patients presenting with aneurysmal subarachnoid haemorrhage
Multiple Centres including Monash health, Austin health	The PORTHOS study: A Prospective angiOtensin vs. noRadrenaline Trial for Hypotension management to reduce length Of hospital stay in Cardiac Surgery
The University of Sydney, NHMRC	DECIDE Trial : Dexmedetomidine in Cardiac surgical Intraoperative Drug Evaluation (DECIDE). Local PI: Dr Florian Pracher
Nepean Hospital Sydney	Remi-Fent1 study: This is a multicentre pilot study assessing (Chief Investigator Dr Arvind Rajamani Nepean Hospital Sydney, PI is Dr Lachlan Quick in ICU) if Remifentanil sedation when compared to Fentanyl is associated with decreased ICU length of stay and delirium.
ANZICS-RC	NEPTUNE Trial: NEt ultrafiltration Prescription and Targeting versus Usual NEt ultrafiltration during continuous renal replacement therapy. Local PI: Dr Stephen Whebell
ANZICS-RC	REMAP-CAP: (Randomised, Embedded, Multi-factorial, Adaptive Platform Trial for Community Acquired Pneumonia): This trial is run by ANZIC-RC and Associate Professor Aidan Burrell (Alfred Hospital)
St George Hospital, Sydney	Cold Temperatures in patients with sepsis (CRISP): Multicentre observational study to evaluate role of warming in sepsis. Leads by Dr Manoj Saxena (St George Hospital, Sydney)

Current Studies run by TUH ICU (Local Early career Investigators)

Торіс	Туре	Lead Investigator	Supervisor(s)	Stage
Thermoregulatory Effect and fever Management with Propranolol in Traumatic Brain Injury (TEMP-TBI) study	Retrospective audit	Aruthy Saseendran (6th Year Student JCU)	Dr Sananta Dash	Manuscript Completed Awaiting Submission
Outcomes for Indigenous Australians with Pulmonary Hypertension following Post- Operative Intensive Care Admission for Cardiac and Non- Cardiac Surgery	Retrospective audit	Hailey Smith (Intern)	Dr Sananta Dash	Data Analysis
TRAP-VAP: TRaumatic brain injury: Antibiotic Prophylaxis to prevent Ventilation-Associated Pneumonia	Retrospective audit	Daniel Stoker (Intern)	Dr Sananta Dash	Data Collection
Euglycemic Ketoacidosis- Epidemiology and outcome post ICU admission	Retrospective audit	Dennis Castillo (4th year, Honours project)	Dr Sananta Dash/ Dr Siva Senthuran/ Professor Clare Heal/ Dr Leanne Hall	Data Collection
Post Operative Opioid Use in Post Cardiothoracic Indigenous Patients and After Effects	Retrospective audit	Izza Zahid (4th year, Honours project)	Dr Sananta Dash/ Dr. Stephen Perks/ A/Prof. Nagaraja Haleagrahara	Data Collection
Retinal findings in critically ill patients in the intensive care unit.	Prospective Observational QA	Dr Manasi Hegde (Corresponding Author) Dr Sheetal Shirke (Associate investigator) Stephen Whebell (AI) Siva Senthuran (PI)		Protocol completed
Development of a research- oriented platform for collecting high frequency mechanical ventilator waveform data	Prospective proof-of-concept methodological study	Dr Stephen Whebell		Data collection
Retrospective audit of in-hospital cardiac arrests (IHCA) and their suitability for extracorporeal cardiopulmonary resuscitation (ECPR)	Retrospective audit	Dr Justine Borlagdan	Dr Stephen Whebell	Data collection
Clinical outcomes of leukemoid reactions in Australian Intensive Care Units	Multi-centre retrospective cohort study	Dr Kian Lotter	Dr Stephen Whebell	Data Analysis

Persistent Pain

Key Researchers

Shereen Gilmore – Principal Investigator / Senior Psychologist

Key Collaborators

Blake F Dear1, Shereen Gilmore², Nicole Campbell², Nickolai Titov¹, Alison Beeden²

¹ eCentreClinic, School of Psychological Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

² North Queensland Persistent Pain Management Service, Townsville Hospital and Health Services, Queensland, Australia.



Women's and Children's Services, including community specialist services, provide primary to tertiary level services across the breadth of Townsville Hospital and health Service. Leaders within services focus on clinicians and support teams working to top of scope with a focus on world class health care. Services are diverse and include maternity and gynaecology, newborn, children, BreastScreen, oral health, prisoner health, sexual health and youth detention. During 2024 services have received funding allocation based on evidence for models of care linked to improvements in health outcome, successfully applied for research grants, forged collaborations and completed quality improvement activities that have improved the quality and safety of healthcare.

From Richmond to Palm Island, Cardwell to Home Hill, clinical teams provide care close to home. This care is enhanced through support of student training through university partnerships, participation in national collaborative and benchmarking opportunities and especially through research. The breadth of projects in this report shows the commitment to excellent health care, a culture of lifelong learning and prioritisation of closing the evidence – practice gap.

Onwards and upwards!

Vicki Carson

Service Group Director

Women's and Children's Service Group

New research projects approved in 2024 Women's and Children's Service Group

Principal Investigators	Department	Study Title
Dr Yoga Kandasamy	Neonatology	Machine Learning Method for Measuring Blood Pressure and monitoring renal perfusion non-invasively in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
Mrs Kelly Horne	Neonatal Unit	Predicting neurodevelopmental outcomes of moderate to late preterm (MLP) infants: biopsychosocial and cultural determinants
Dr Arun Menon	Townsville Sexual Health Service	Prevalence of anorectal Chlamydia Trachomatis infection in asymptomatic urogenital Chlamydia Trachomatis positive women who present to regional North Queensland Sexual Health Services: CTIIW
Ms Carly Hislop	Child Development Service	The impacts of the FASD clinic for clients and practitioners in THHS: An evaluation study
Dr Jason Yates	Paediatrics	Diabetes in Schools Expansion Pilot Project
Miss Alyssa Einhorn	Paediatrics	The initial management of paediatric acute leukemia in regional northern Queensland
Dr Andrew White	Paediatrics	Implementation of solutions to improve follow-up for First Nations children hospitalised with lower respiratory tract infections (ACE Study).
Dr Yoga Kandasamy	Neonatal Unit	The role of cotside cameras in promoting breastfeeding and enhancing parent-infant attachment and wellbeing in the neonatal unit
Dr Arun Menon	Sexual Health	A multi-centre, prospective, longitudinal cohort study of Chlamydia trachomatis infection and reinfection in adults aged 18 to 29 years.: A study of Chlamydia trachomatis infection and reinfection in young adults
Dr Nicholas Hill	Neonatology	Staphylococcus capitis positive blood cultures in very low birth weight infants at Townsville University Hospital – pathogen or contaminant?
Dr Arjun Chavan	Paediatric Intensive Care Unit	P-ICECAP: Paediatric Influence of Cooling duration on Efficacy in Cardiac Arrest Patients
Dr Kendall George	Maternity Services	Beyond the Bump: Leveraging social media to build positive perinatal mental health in regional, rural and remote North Queensland women
Dr Kendall George	Maternity Services	Harnessing technology in labour and birth for women with increased BMI

Research Groups – Women's and Children's Service Group Perinatal Research Group

Perinatal research teams actively participated in a variety of research projects, quality activities, and collaboratives during 2024.

Key Researchers

- Dr Yogavijayan Kandasamy, Principal investigator
- Dr Kendall George, Principal investigator
- Dr David Watson, Principal investigator
- Dr Sonja Brennan, Principal investigator/ Co-investigator
- Dr Susan Ireland, Principal investigator/ Co-investigator
- Dr Mary Ghazawy, Co-investigator
- Ms Annemarie Lawrence, Clinical Research Coordinator
- Ms Simone Scully, Clinical Research Coordinator
- · Ms Linda Neily, Clinical Research Coordinator
- Ms Katie Nye, Clinical Research Coordinator

Key Collaborators

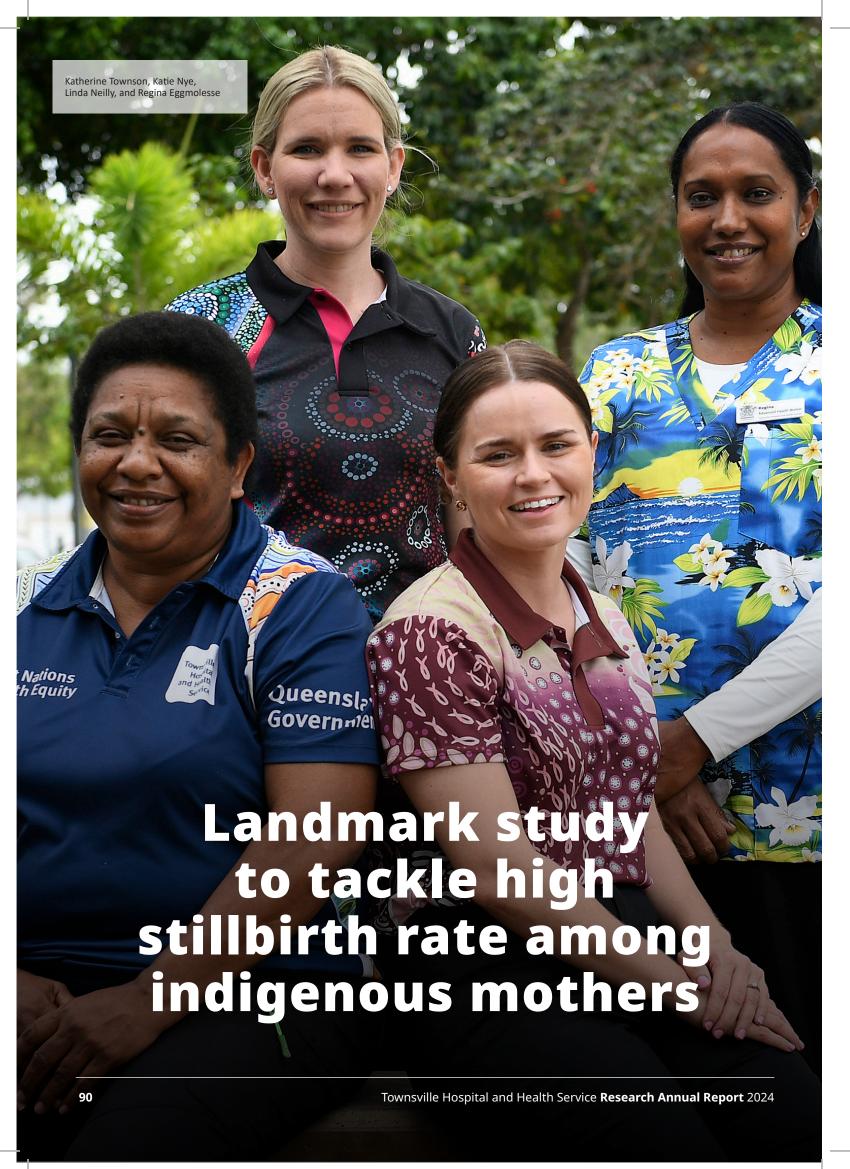
- Dr Andrew White, THHS
- Dr Cecelia O'Brien, THHS
- · Dr Venkat Vengaveti, THHS
- Ms Cherie Boniface, THHS
- Ms Katie Mandell, THHS
- · Ms Sheree Menon, THHS
- · Prof Yvonne Cadet-James, JCU
- Dr Meegan Kilcullen, JCU
- A Prof. Donna Rudd, JCU
- Dr Danica Vojisavljevic, JCU
- · Dr Stephanie Baker, JCU
- Prof Roger Smith UON/HMRI

Collaborating Institutions

- Australian Preterm Prevention Alliance
- · College of Healthcare Sciences, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia
- College of Medicine and Dentistry, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia
- Hunter Medical Research Institute, University of Newcastle
- Indigenous Health, Mater Research Institute
- · Liggins Institute, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand
- Maternal Fetal Medicine Research, The University of Melbourne, Australia
- NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth, Mater Research Institute and University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia
- · School of Medicine, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia
- School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine, University of the Sunshine Coast, Sippy Downs, Australia.
- The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia
- Women's Healthcare Australasia (WHA)

Active recruitment / implementation / investigation / collaboration

- C*STEROID Trial: Corticosteroids before planned caesarean section from 35+0 to 39+6 weeks of pregnancy.
- Timing Of Birth study: Stillbirth risk assessment and shared decision making around timing of birth: pilot evaluation. A sub-study of the Safer Baby Bundle Initiative.
- Every Week Counts National Preterm Birth Prevention Collaborative
- Induction of labour (IOL) working party
- Strengthening Endorsed Midwives Role in the Public Sector
- Measuring patient perspective in health service maternity care
- Registrar Audits: IOL compliance with timing and indication guidelines; IOL method and outcomes; Preeclampsia risk assessment; Surgical site infections at Caesarean; Surgical TOP; Pasteurised Human Donor Milk (PDHUM) in premature babies.
- The Role of cot side camera in promoting breastfeeding and Providing family-centred Care for surgical neonates
- Monitoring renal perfusion non-invasively in preterm neonates using near infrared spectroscopy (NIRS)
- Closing the gap in the stillbirth rate: Understanding the issues and challenges in gaining permission for autopsy
- Predicting neurodevelopmental outcomes of moderate to late preterm (MLP) infants: biopsychosocial and cultural determinants



A landmark study at Townsville University Hospital will examine the stillbirth rate among Indigenous mothers, at almost double the non-Indigenous rate.

The research team of neonatologist Professor Yoga Kandasamy, JCU's Dr Meegan Kilcullen, and maternal fetal medicine director Associate Professor David Watson, was awarded \$140,000 from the Study Education and Research Trust Account, the largest individual grant in the health service's history, to undertake the study.

"Despite major advances in neonatal and obstetric care, a pregnant Indigenous woman is twice as likely to lose a baby in utero or in the first 28 days of life than a non-Indigenous woman," Yoga said.

"Although it's uncomfortable and emotional to talk about, in 50 to 60 per cent of cases autopsy will find a cause of death; without an autopsy, we are often only guessing."

Yoga said one focus area was encouraging families who have suffered a perinatal death to allow an autopsy.

This includes working with Elders and HHS staff like local midwives Katie Nye and Linda Neilly, health worker Katherine Townson and advanced health worker Regina Eggemolesse.

"Encouraging an Indigenous mother to consent to autopsy is, culturally, a significant challenge and we are looking to involve our local Elders to draw on their wisdom," he said.

David said understanding how to approach our Indigenous mothers and families in an appropriate and respectful way, about autopsy, was key to reducing those high rates of stillbirth.

"We spoke to mothers who had lost babies and it helped us understand why some mothers would consent to autopsy while others wouldn't," he said.

The study is being undertaken with the cultural mentorship and guidance of Professor Yvonne Cadet-James from JCU's Indigenous Education and Research Centre.

"There are cultural reasons which may not mean that autopsy is ruled out but First Nations mothers lack awareness about the potential benefits of autopsy and the link to future healthy pregnancies," Yvonne said.

"The beauty of this study is that it honours the voices of First Nations women, including Elders."

Yoga said the study would take time, but the long-term benefits would be immense.

"This study will inform future maternal, fetal, and perinatal care of Indigenous women across the country," he said.

Staff who are keen to get more information about this study, or participate in it, are welcome to contact Katie Nye on katie.nye@health.qld. gov.au and Linda Neilly on linda.neilly@health.qld.gov.au

Human Research Ethics Committee

The high level of research activity, and the high level of complexity in applications received, continue to require the HREC to maintain two rosters of members to ensure timely turnaround of applications without overloading individual members. We have been fortunate to have continually found experts from all categories of potential members; lay, legal, faith-bases, as well as clinical and research-experienced, willing to serve.

Data management and data security, particularly as regards use of large language models and artificial Intelligence in health research, have emerged as dominant themes in an increasing number of applications received by the HREC. Helping us meet this challenge, The newly formed Data Laboratory, led by Rudolf Schnetler, has already proved its worth role in enhancing and safeguarding research practice at THHS.

For the 5th year in a row, I was a member of the organizing committee for the National HREC conference, held virtually 23-25 November. More than 2500 HREC chairs, coordinators, members, researchers, academics, and health services administrators attended. Attendance has increased greatly over the years of the conference. That and survey responses show that it is considered a valuable resource and opportunity to share information and gain skills. Rudolf Schnetler and Karl McKenzie from THHS presented at the conference, with Mr. McKenzie's presentation on cultural safety being especially powerful. He was awarded the Rob Loblay award for this presentation.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of our two Deputy Chairs, Wendy Smyth and Mary Leech, clinicians and researchers in their own right, and, especially, Kelly Parker, our Coordinator, who has now achieved well-deserved permanent status in the role.

Hudson Birden

Chair, Townsville Hospital and Health Service Human Research Ethics Committee

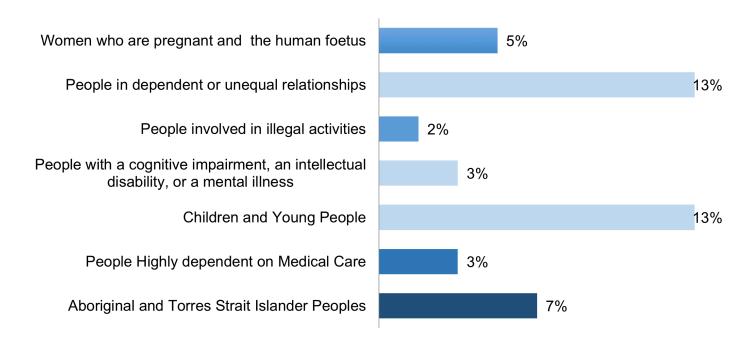
HREC Report

HREC Activity	2024 RESULTS
Research applications received:	87 (66% low or negligible risk studies)
Research applications approved:	52
Low-Risk applications received:	57
Multi-Site Applications received:	30 (34% of new applications)
Research applications not approved or withdrawn:	3
Research applications awaiting information or review:	9
Invalid research applications received, not resubmitted	22
Non-research endorsement requests received:	47 (30% not eligible for exemption)
Non-research endorsements granted:	33
Total amendments to existing studies reviewed	171
Average response time for High-Risk applications	48 clock days (target = 60 clock days)
Average response time for Low-Risk applications	29 clock days (target = 60 clock days)

Categories of research:

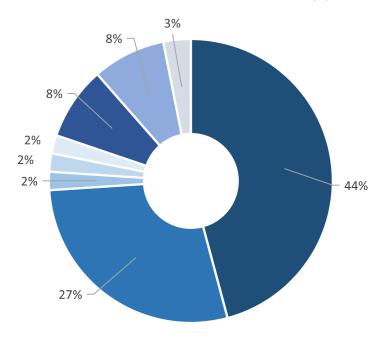
Reported to the National Health and Medical Research Council

Research with sensitive population groups



Types of Research

CATEGORIES OF RESEARCH - % of total applications approved⁺



- Health Research / Social Science 44%
- Clinical Trial Other 2%
- Clinical Trial Drug 2%
- Data Linkage 8%

- Clinical Research 27%
- Clinical Trial Device 2%
- Other 8%
- Registry 3%

Research Governance and Support

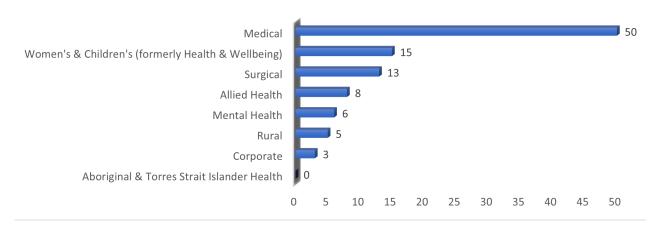
Research Governance

As at 31/12/2024 there were 730 active research studies within THHS, including 89 clinical trials.

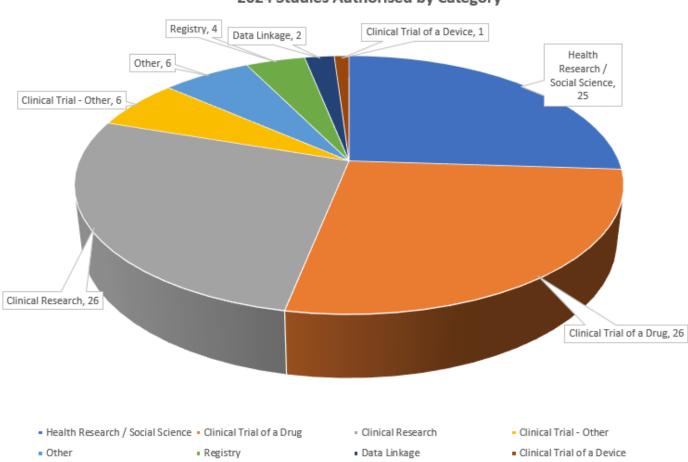
Governance Activity		2024 Results	
Research governance (SSA applications) received in 2024:	100	↑ from 86 in 2023	
New research projects authorised in 2024:	96	↑ from 87 in 2023 (includes 32 clinical trials)	
Average response time to reach a decision on new SSA applications (clock days)	7	(target = 25 clock days) \checkmark from 15 in 2023	
New Post Authorisation Notifications received in 2024	525	↑ from 492 in 2023	
Total number of submissions received by Research Governance Office for new and existing projects in 2024 (including resubmissions)	901	↑ from 833 in 2023	

Studies Authorised by Service Group

(note - studies involving multiple service groups are counted against each group involved)



2024 Studies Authorised by Category



Organisations collaborating with, or conducting research at THHS in 2024

- AbbVie Pty Ltd
- Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care
 Research Centre (ANZICS-RC), Monash
 University
- Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society
- · Australian Catholic University Limited
- Australian Genomic Cancer Medicine Centre Ltd t/a Omico
- Australian Leukemia & Lymphoma Group (ALLG)
- · Medpace Australia Pty Ltd
- · BeiGene AUS Pty Ltd
- · Cancer Alliance Queensland
- · Childrens Health Queensland
- · Clinical Excellence Queensland
- Curtin University
- Eli Lilly Australia Pty Ltd
- GlaxoSmithKline Australia PTY LTD
- Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service
- Griffith University
- Health Data Specialist Australia Pty Ltd
- · IQIVIA RDS Pty Limited
- James Cook University
- Macquarie University
- Merck Sharp & Dohme (Australia) Pty Ltd
- Metro South HHS

- Monash Health
- Monash University
- · Novo Nordisk Pharmaceuticals Pty Ltd
- · Novotech (Australia) Pty Ltd
- · Perth children's hospital foundation
- Pfizer Australia Pty Ltd
- · PPD Australia Pty Ltd
- Princess Alexandra Hospital
- PSI CRO Australia Pty Limited
- Queensland University of Technology
- Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
- · Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital
- · Sanofi-Aventis Australia Pty Ltd
- Southern Adelaide Local Health Network
- Telethon Kids Institute
- The George Institute for Global Health
- The Kids Institute (Telethon)
- The University of Adelaide
- · The University of Queensland
- Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre
- University of Canberra
- · University of New South Wales
- · University of Queensland
- University of Sydney
- · University of the Sunshine Coast

Research Data Laboratory (RDL)

RDL Activity	2024 RESULTS
Data service requests completed:	338
Research projects completed:	10
Average response time to complete service requests (days)	5

The Research Data Laboratory (RDL) supports and enables research at the Townsville University Hospital by providing a range of services to advance digital health research. The RDL's core services include providing secure health data for research purposes and developing researchers' capabilities in data governance. We assist researchers in creating appropriate data management plans for their projects, ensuring all data is collected, used, disseminated, and stored in compliance with governance and legislative requirements. The RDL also manages unique infrastructure that allows high-quality digital research at THHS.

Supporting Research into Chronic Kidney Disease Outcomes

The Research Data Laboratory (RDL) has been involved in several projects over the last 12 months and are often able to collaborate with the research team to deliver projects utilising data from multiple sources, culminating in a peer-reviewed publication.

The RDL serves as the designated service providing secure environments for accessing and analysing HREC (Human Research Ethics Committee) or AQUIRE (Audit, Quality, and Innovation Review) approved health data for research purposes. The RDL's services extend beyond providing access; it includes offering essential advice and support on data governance and management best practices throughout the research data lifecycle. This encompasses guidance on appropriate data collection (extraction in this case), secure storage within the RDL environment, controlled dissemination, and eventual secure destruction or archiving protocols. In addition to providing transactional services, the RDL also collaborates on a range of digital health research projects. With expertise in statistical analysis, machine learning/AI modelling and data engineering the RDL collaborates and co-authors HREC or AQUIRE governed projects

A recent project provides a clear example of this collaborative process in action. It originated from a request by a clinician-researcher conducting a retrospective cohort study on adult patients with a serum potassium result of 5.1 mmol/L and above during their admission/s to provide a simple data extract. The PI initially engaged the RDL through the Service Desk (https://datalab.thsd.health.qld. gov.au/request). However, during initial discussions aimed at refining the data extraction process, it became apparent that the project's requirements were more complex than initially specified. Accurately identifying relevant patient cohorts, tracking hyperkalaemia episodes, correlating medication usage, and linking these elements to long-term clinical outcomes within the complex structure of the ieMR (integrated electronic Medical Record) necessitated a more sophisticated approach.

To facilitate the expanded support required beyond the initial data request, the RDL assisted the project team by formally joining the project governance structure. This allowed for an increase in allocated time and resources, pivoting the engagement from a simple service request into a truly collaborative partnership. The RDL enhanced the data extraction, by developing advanced logic and parameters to accurately capture the nuanced clinical data required from the ieMR. The RDL also refined the statistical analysis approach, providing interpretation and consultation through its specialised biostatistical expertise. This assisted the team in analysing the relationships within the dataset and interpreting the findings. This collaborative effort significantly contributed to the research study, which was subsequently published in BMC Nephrology (https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12882-024-03863-w).

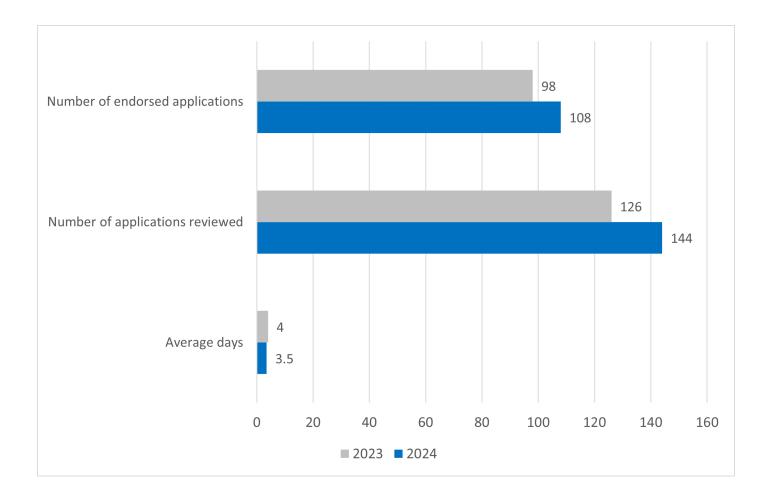
The study described that hyperkalaemia is prevalent in CKD patients, particularly those on RAAS inhibitors. It also compared patients with kidney failure on haemodialysis to those without, finding that the former group experienced more severe hyperkalaemia and a higher representation of Indigenous individuals. Importantly, the analysis demonstrated that hyperkalaemia itself is independently associated with significant adverse outcomes, including increased risks of mortality, major adverse cardiovascular events (MACE), and progression to end-stage kidney disease.

This project highlights the capabilities of the RDL in initially supporting a data extract to progressing to a complex, data-intensive project. By combining secure data access through the RDL with expert consultation on data extraction, governance, management, and statistical analysis, the RDL contributes to the vital role in transforming clinical data into valuable research insights. This work directly supports the generation of knowledge aimed at improving patient care and clinical decision-making within our health service.

Audit, Quality and Innovation Review (AQUIRE)

The Audit, Quality and Innovation Review (AQUIRE) process provides a robust and efficient review service for quality assurance project proposals submitted by staff who intend to disseminate the findings of their project beyond Queensland Health.

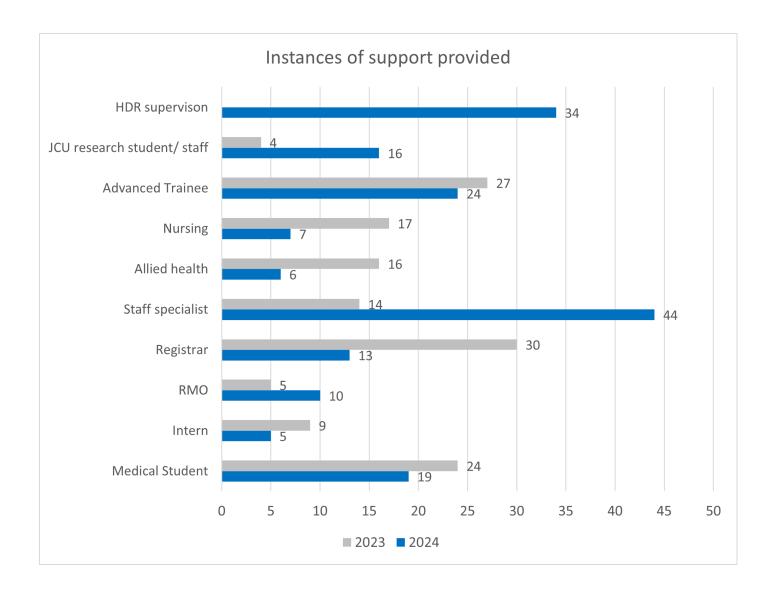
The AQUIRE panel's dedication and efficiency have significantly contributed to the success of the program. By streamlining the approval process for non-research quality improvement applications, the panel has facilitated the timely implementation of crucial quality improvement initiatives. enabling the rapid translation of study findings into practice but has also effectively assisted the HREC in fulfilling its essential functions.

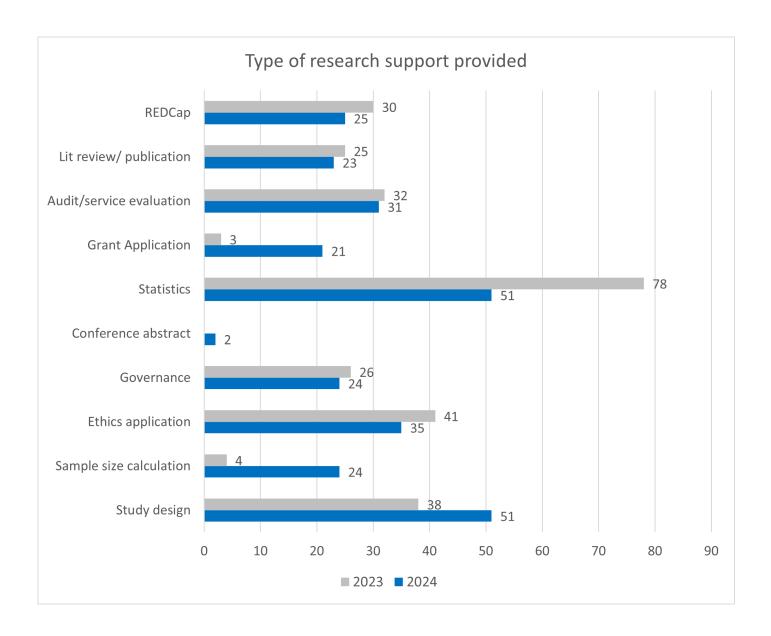


Research Support Services

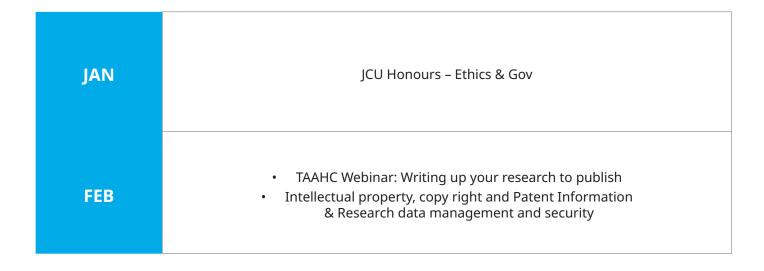
The research support team experienced a significant increase in activity in 2024. Support was provided to a diverse range of researchers, including medical students, staff specialists, allied health professionals, nurses, and trainees at all levels. A total of 178 instances of support were delivered in 2024, a 22% increase from 146 in 2023.

The team remains committed to providing tailored support to all researchers, regardless of their role or specific needs. This ensures that all members of our research community have access to the necessary resources and guidance to thrive in their research endeavours.

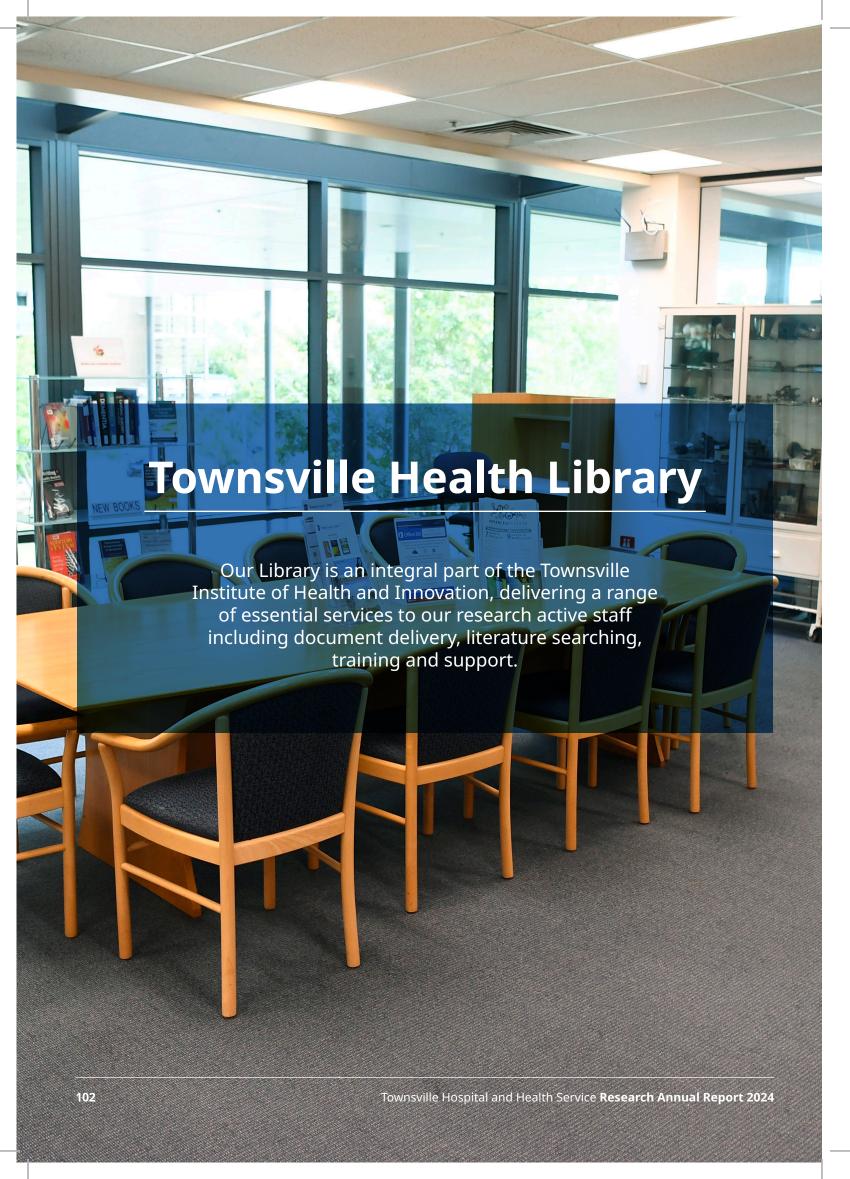




Throughout 2024, with the help of our colleagues from the Tropical Australian Academic Health Centre (TAAHC), we conducted a series of workshops and educational activities as outlined in the calendar below. A staff survey in early 2023 determined the focus of these workshops. We are also using the survey results to guide the selection of future educational activities, ensuring that we offer topics most requested by our staff.



MAR	 Online Grant Writing Workshop EMCR's #1 - Preparing a Compelling Application Health Economics and Evaluation Training Course RR-CLaN Webinar: Preparing an abstract for a conference TAAHC Webinar: Conducting clinical trials in northern Queensland – how to hear about them, conduct them, and get support
APR	 1 Day Research Skills Workshop Health Economics and Evaluation Training Course- part 2 (2-day) Grant Writing Workshop EMCR's #2 – Writing for Impact TAAHC Webinar: Health Economics 101: What is it and why is it important? RR CLaN Webinar: Knowledge translation: applying the knowledge to action framework
MAY	 TAAHC Webinar: Improving heart health checks: A decade of codesign and partnerships RR CLaN Webinar: Publicly available health data: What is it and how to use it Basics of consumer training Co-design principles in action
JUN	Effective Literature Searching and EndNote Ethics and Governance workshop Abstract writing workshop EMCCR 2-day retreat (Charters Towers): goal setting; developing as mentors/ supervisors; grants; career planning TAAHC Webinar: Different ways to partner with communities in research RR CLaN Webinar: A dive into qualitative research
JUL	 1 Day Research Skills Workshop Research Data Management TAAHC Webinar: How to appraise a systematic review and interpret a forest plot Public Health Advocacy Short Course (JCU)
AUG	 1 Day Research Skills Course TAAHC Webinar: Digital health innovation and application to rural and remote health services in northern Queensland
SEPT	 1 Day Research Skills Course TAAHC Webinar: Get to the point! This and more tips for great presentation skills RR CLaN Webinar: How to search the physiotherapy evidence database (PEDro) to answer clinical questions
ост	 TropiQ Townsville Research Symposium TAAHC Webinar: How to store data in Excel RR CLaN Webinar: Writing for publication – 'IMRAD style'
NOV	-
DEC	-



Library refurbishment

Responding to feedback from THHS Staff to our Townsville Health Library Survey in late 2021 the Townsville Health Library underwent an extensive refurbishment commencing January 2024. Completed late August 2024 the refurbishment delivered a repurposed, modern library that improved the use of technology and space.

Enhancements included:

- 16 new desks and an almost doubling of desktop computers to 17 (all with double screens)
- Additional power points, wireless chargers and USB points throughout the library
- 21 custom-built private workspaces to accommodate client and library laptop use.
- Two quiet reading zones
- Ergonomic mixed seating
- 24/7 self-checkout kiosk for library clients
- 1 additional break-out room to compliment the two other refurbished break out rooms.

Before



After



Before



After



Publication Metrics

Publication Metrics*	2024 Results	
Peer reviewed publications by THHS staff	266	✓ from 273 in 2023
Field Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) – citation of THHS publications at global average or above.	1.21	↓ from 1.26 in 2023
% of publications in the top 10% Journal Percentile	31.6%	↑ from 22.4% in 2023
% of publications that involve international collaborations	26.8%	♦ from 29.7% in 2023

^{*} Publication metrics are sourced from SCOPUS and SciVal as at 1 Feb 2025. Note, 2024 results provided are expected to increase once final 2024 data is available to report from. Final data for 2024 will not be available until June 2025.

Publications by Subject Area	Number of Publications*
Medicine	191
Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology	18
Nursing	16
Health Professions	12
Neuroscience	8
Psychology	7
Social Sciences	6
Immunology and Microbiology	4

Physics and Astronomy	4
Multidisciplinary	3
Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics	2
Agricultural and Biological Sciences	1
Chemical Engineering	1
Computer Science	1
Dentistry	1
Environmental Science	1

^{*} Some publications cover multiple subject areas. Where this occurs, the publication is counted separately against each relevant subject area.

Library Services Delivered

Library Activity	2024 Results
Librarian mediated literature searches performed	98
Articles acquired for staff	1,131
Instances of one-on-one client instruction provided	1,354
Formal information literacy class attendees	203
Information requests	4,781
Active registered library clients	1,471



THHS Research Publications 2024

Where possible, full text has been provided via Open Access
Articles not available through Open Access can be obtained via CKN
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Queensland Health employees must register with CKN to access full text articles or to request full text articles

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