

Research News

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Next edition: June

Welcome to Issue #8

from Allied Health Research Lead

Dr Hazel Heng

Greetings everyone, and welcome to the first research newsletter of 2025! 2024 has been a whirlwind of excellent Allied Health research contributions and projects. The upcoming Allied Health Research Report and infographic (included in this newsletter) reflects how much effort and work has been put in over the past year, and I congratulate all who have had amazing achievements, presented at conferences, and won awards.



We began this year with the exciting opportunity of the NH Research Grants Program where any clinician could apply for funding to support their project. As part of our service, we supported any Allied Health clinician with their application and provided advice and guidance as required. 2025 is also a big year in terms of Allied Health conferences (see inside for details) and we encourage any Allied Health clinician who is thinking of submitting an abstract to get in touch with our team. We can provide support around abstract writing and submission, and more.

Finally, please look forward to research development opportunities our team is excited to deliver this year, from research development workshops to discipline-specific roadshows and of course, our yearly Stepping into Research program. I look forward to an even bigger year this year for Allied Health research!

If you have any queries or questions about research, no matter big or small, please reach out to AH.Research@nh.org.au or through our research clinic.

Northern Health acknowledges Victoria's Aboriginal communities and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land (the Wurundjeri people) on which Northern Health's campuses are built.

We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to our lives and we embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards the equality of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice.

Northern Health celebrates, values, and includes people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.



HOT OFF THE PRESS: Allied Health Research Roadshow

The first Allied Health Research Ideas Roadshow was held late last year with the Speech Pathology team and Associate Professor Annie Hill. This was an interactive session, aimed at spreading awareness of supports available to clinicians through the allied health research team and partnerships with La Trobe university. The session also provided time to brainstorm and explore opportunities to build on research questions or small projects within the department currently.

The session featured Dr Annie Hill, who is a speech-language pathologist with over 20 years of experience researching telerehabilitation across all aspects of speech pathology practice. Annie is the foremost researcher in aphasia telerehabilitation and has developed telerehabilitation systems and protocols for delivery of both assessment and treatment of aphasia via telerehabilitation. Through university partnerships with Northern Health, Dr Annie Hill can provide additional support and guidance on initiating or designing projects in future.

Following its success, this event has paved the way for future ideas lab sessions to be rolled out with each allied health discipline in 2025. If you have an idea for your discipline, these sessions allow space to brainstorm as a team on how best to initiate projects, solve a problem or answer a question relevant to your discipline.

With sessions planned throughout the year, speak to your allied health committee representative or contact the allied health research team for an update on when your discipline may be scheduled.



Images to right: A/Prof Annie Hill (top) and Prof Adam Semciw presenting to speech pathology team.

Northern Health Grants Program 2025

Applications for the Northern Health Research Grants Program 2025 have now closed. Good luck to all applicants who applied for the **NH Foundation Grant (\$50,000)**, **Research @ Northern Support Grants (\$20,000)** and **Grants in Aid (\$10,000)**. Successful applicants will be announced in June this year.

Missed the boat? Reach out to the AH Research Team if you would be interested in other upcoming potential funding opportunities or have any questions about grant applications.

GCP training options

There are *free GCP courses* available on the [NH internet](#), with two paths to complete the course:

1. Use links on the website (A-CTEC or Global Health) and complete the online course, then log into LMS once you receive your GCP certificate, self-enrol and save it the corporate register.
2. Self-enrol within LMS, use links within the LMS course (to either A-CTEC or Global Health) to complete your certification and then upload the certificate once obtained.

If you do not wish to complete a standalone GCP course, A-CTEC offers two longer courses which upon completion include GCP certification (so is acceptable to upload via LMS):

1. Trials Essentials for Research Support Team (ICH E6 R2 GCP included) – this is 6 courses with an evaluation and completion certificate
2. Trials Essentials for Investigators (ICH E6 R2 GCP included) – this is 5 courses with an evaluation and completion certificate

Annually in June, Northern Health also offers an *online 2-hour Advanced GCP course* on the pivotal role of Principal Investigators and their responsibilities beyond the fundamental requirements of GCP. This is also acceptable to upload to LMS as the training is provided by a TranCelerate approved trainer.

Allied Health Research Report 2024

The Allied Health Research Report for 2024 has been finalised and is now available on the intranet [here](#). The report is released annually and aims to highlight the key successes and achievements across all of allied health, including our mental health allied health team, in the past year.

Together, we celebrated:

- o **Expansion of Allied Health research team** with new appointment of Post Doctorate Research Fellow – Virtual Health Services (1.0 EFT) position
- o **>4 successful grant applications** totaling more than \$1.95M in support of multidisciplinary research and quality improvement, across falls and virtual emergency services
- o **A successful research week** with two awards received for 'Best Printed Poster' on Day 1 and 2 across Allied Health and 10 oral and poster presentations delivered
- o **2 PhDs completed**; within Allied Health Research and Dietetics teams
- o **The largest cohort within the Stepping Into Research (SIR) program to date**, with 12 participants across Physiotherapy, Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Speech Pathology and Mental Health
- o **Continuation of the research newsletter series**, with 5 distributed across the year
- o **37 publications in total across all Allied Health**, including 3 SIR publications
- o **>65 conference presentations**, both national and international
- o **The rollout of research-focused workshops**, with 3 sessions delivered throughout the year

An infographic is also available on page 11 of this issue – please share with your colleagues and wider networks in celebration of an incredible year in Allied Health at Northern Health.

Open Access with Springer and Oxford Journals

Northern Health Library is pleased to announce a *Read and Publish* agreement with Springer and Oxford University Press for 2025, which includes a limited open access publishing component. This provides Northern Health staff with the opportunity to publish their work as open access in eligible Springer and Oxford journals at no additional cost.

Springer Journals:

Open Access Publishing: Available on a *first-come, first-served* basis.

Eligibility: Applies to articles accepted for publication in eligible Springer journals during 2025 (note – full OA titles are excluded).

Action Required: Submit your manuscript to an eligible journal and select Northern Health as your institution when prompted. Springer Journals Author Submission process:

<https://www.springernature.com/gp/authors/publish-an-article>

Oxford Journals:

Open Access Publishing: Available on a *first-come, first-served* basis.

Eligibility: Applies to articles accepted for publication in eligible Oxford journals during 2025 (list here: [Victorian Health Libraries Consortium \(VHLC\) | Oxford Academic](#)).

Action Required: Submit your manuscript to an eligible journal and select Northern Health as your institution when prompted.

We encourage researchers planning submissions to Springer and Oxford journals to act quickly to take advantage of this valuable opportunity. For more information, please contact NHLibInfo@nh.org.au.

Launch of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Research Partnership

The launch of the Northern Health and La Trobe University Research Partnership – Advancing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion occurred on Tuesday, 25th of March. The afternoon featured engaging discussions on advancing health research in this important sector, including a keynote presentation by Professor Bianca Brijnath alongside other researchers including Dr Adam Semciw and Fan Hoak (PhD Candidate) and an inaugural address by Debra Bourne, Chief Executive at Northern Health.

This research partnership will help to identify barriers and enablers for our CALD community, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and those living with disability, or remotely, receiving timely access to care, further enhancing strategies through research to improve patient outcomes and care in the future.



Images L-R:
Fan Hoak,
Adam Semciw



Stepping Into Research (SIR) update

The SIR program is a 12-week program designed to introduce allied health clinicians to the process of conducting and writing up a systematic review in a topic of their interest, relevant to their area of work. Participants receive 4 x 3-hour small group training sessions and weekly mentoring throughout the duration of the program from senior peers, the allied health research team and more experienced researchers through collaboration with La Trobe University. No previous research experience is required.

Drop in sessions will be held in May – keep an eye out for email announcements this month with further information on this year's program and how to express interest.

Previous Candidate updates

In 2024, the Allied Health Research Team ran their largest program to date, with 12 Allied Health clinicians across Physiotherapy, Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Speech Pathology and Mental Health. All clinicians will be given the **opportunity to present at Research Week in 2025** to showcase their research to date. Research Week details will also be announced later this year.

Congratulations again to SIR participants from 2021 and 2022 on their publications in 2024:

- **Ryan Hon** - Senior Physiotherapist and Stepping Into Research Participant (2022)
Title: Conservative management of Type III A/B chronic prostatitis/chronic pelvic pain syndrome: a systematic review. See further details [here](#).
- **Miyuki Watanabe** – Senior Speech Pathologist and Stepping Into Research Participant (2022)
Title: Positive effects of speech and language therapy group interventions in primary progressive aphasia: A systematic review. See further details [here](#).
- **Iryoung Fan** – Senior Physiotherapist and Stepping Into Research Participant (2021)
Title: How effective are exercises delivered digitally (requiring internet), amongst patients with hip or knee osteoarthritis? A systematic review and meta-analysis. See further details [here](#).

Tips and tricks – CINAHL Database

Thank you to our librarian, Tania Barry, for sharing this quarter's tips.

Looking for literature to support your practice, update guidelines or start a quality improvement project? Try CINAHL, one of the most comprehensive databases for nursing & allied health professionals where you can search for books, book chapters, conference papers and journal articles. Most allied health specialties are covered in this database, including dietetics, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, podiatry, social work, speech pathology and more. Some full-text PDFs are available directly from CINAHL, saving you time when looking for literature.

Access [CINAHL](#) via the link provided or on the Northern Health [eLibrary](#). CINAHL is available onsite or offsite via your library barcode number (or your staff number for newer staff). If you need help with offsite access, searching CINAHL or accessing full text PDFs, contact the library at nhlibinfo@nh.org.au.

Current Allied Health low risk research projects

- ✓ Falls and Body Schema Research Project (**Physiotherapy**)
- ✓ Relationship between back pain beliefs, health literacy and presentation to ED with low back pain (**Physiotherapy**)
- ✓ Understanding the feasibility of implementing an electronic Health Passport for people living with disability and/or complex needs accessing Victorian public healthcare organisations (**Physiotherapy**)
- ✓ Allied Health Research Clinic (**Physiotherapy and Orthopaedics**)
- ✓ Web based resource for people with osteoarthritis: a pragmatic feasibility study (**Physiotherapy and Orthopaedics**)
- ✓ HIPSTER: HIP fracture Supplemental Therapy to Enhance Recovery (**Physiotherapy and Orthopaedics**)
- ✓ The association between toe-brachial index results and haemodialysis in patients with End Stage Kidney Disease (**Podiatry**)
- ✓ Australian Diabetes High Risk Foot Service Database (**Podiatry**)
- ✓ Establishing if a bespoke focused rigidity cast containing an air gap reduces pressure at the posterior heel (**Podiatry and Orthotics**)
- ✓ Guardianship in Hospitals – A Health Services / OPA Hospital Pilot Program (**Social Work and Psychology**)
- ✓ Implementing cognitive intervention for older people in Memory Clinics: A pilot feasibility study (**Psychology**)
- ✓ Participation in the electronic Persistent Pain Outcomes Collaboration (ePPOC): An initiative to support continuous improvement in the quality and effectiveness of pain management in Australia (**Psychology**)
- ✓ An analysis of the Safer Care Victoria and Alfred Health collaboration to facilitate implementation of analgesics stewardship programs in Victorian Health Services (**Pharmacy**)
- ✓ Consumer led teach-back to improve recall and retention of health information: A mixed methods randomised controlled trial (**Pharmacy**)
- ✓ Medication transcription errors associated with electronic prescribing during internal hospital transfers of care: a multi-centre study (**Pharmacy**)
- ✓ Investigation of on-site food purchasing behaviour and attitudes at Northern Hospital (**Dietetics**)
- ✓ Victorian ICUs' Nutrition Practices Survey (**Dietetics**)
- ✓ Investigating Malnutrition Australian Diabetes High Risk in Victorian Cancer Services: Malnutrition Prevalence Study 2018 (**Dietetics**)
- ✓ Digital Remote Patient Monitoring for the Progressive Neurological Disorders Clinic at Northern Health (**Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy & Community Therapy Services**)
- ✓ Measuring occupational therapy practice in acute and sub-acute inpatient healthcare settings (**Occupational Therapy and Hand Therapy**)
- ✓ Factors associated with research interest, confidence and experience in allied health clinicians (**Allied Health**)
- ✓ Staff attitudes to using technology to support evidence based medicine and virtual care delivery (**Allied Health**)
- ✓ Setting health service research priorities: a three-step participatory study (**Allied Health**)
- ✓ Understanding the driving support perspectives of community dwelling people living with a mental health condition (**Allied Health Mental Health**)

Approved allied health research projects (non-HREC)

- ✓ Evaluating time efficiencies following the introduction of an Automated Dispensing Cabinet within a mental health ward **(Pharmacy)**
- ✓ Assessing the impact on Pharmacist involvement in clinical transition during an organisation wide electronic medical record implementation **(Pharmacy)**
- ✓ An analysis on the degree of variation in dosing carboplatin using creatinine clearance, CKD-EPI and CamGFR v2 **(Pharmacy)**
- ✓ Partnered Pharmacist Medication Charting (PPMC) during Hospital in the Home (HITH) inpatient stay **(Pharmacy)**
- ✓ The impact of Pentrox® as an effective patient control analgesia alternative and its cost-saving benefits **(Pharmacy)**
- ✓ Evaluation post-stroke communication and swallowing care: is it feasible? **(Speech Pathology)**
- ✓ Determining care outcomes of patients seen by podiatry during an admission after peripheral arterial disease is identified **(Podiatry & Orthotics)**
- ✓ Musculoskeletal Wellness Program Evaluation **(Orthopaedics, Physiotherapy & Staying Well)**
- ✓ A Retrospective Cross-sectional Study on the Outcomes and Associated Factors of Bodily Restraints in the Emergency Department for patients with Mental Health Disorders at The Northern Hospital **(Mental Health)**
- ✓ Mental Health Outlier Program (MHOP) evaluation **(Mental Health)**
- ✓ Community follow up of mental health consumers discharged from forensic services **(Mental Health)**
- ✓ Medtasker and Allied Health **(Informatics)**
- ✓ Advanced Practice Paediatric Dietitian (Nasogastric Tube Insertion and Management) Evaluation **(Dietetics)**
- ✓ Northern Health Spasticity Clinic Review and Recommendation for Redesign **(Community Therapy Service)**

Your Allied Health Research Committee Representatives

- Jeff Khoshaba/ Samantha Botta (Pharmacy)
- Belinda Baines/Jaspreet Kaur (Podiatry)
- Rebecca Turnbull (Exercise Physiology)
- Miyuki Watanabe (Speech Pathology)
- Emily Farrugia (Dietetics)
- Adrienne Munro (Occupational Therapy)
- Elaine Dos Santos (Physiotherapy)
- Brooke Froud Cummins (Psychology)
- Alycea Formosa (Social Work)
- Carolyn Dun (Mental Health)
- Jack Yeung (Prosthetics and Orthotics)
- Yue Hu (TALS)
- Justine Slattery (AH Education)

Allied Health Research Clinic:

Are you:

- ✓ Thinking of starting a research project or have a burning question you're not sure how to answer?
- ✓ Seeking help on an ethics application, whether that be non-HREC, HREC or a QA?
- ✓ Data collecting and wanting extra assistance with interpreting statistics?

The Allied Health Research Clinic is jointly funded by Northern Health and La Trobe University and aims to promote and support research at Northern Health by providing clinicians with the necessary information, education and often the starting point to commence or plan their research projects or ideas.



How to book?

Allied health clinicians can book an appointment via the QR code below. Registration is online and involves providing information about your (i) general and professional demographics; (ii) current research skill/capacity; (iii) specific research question or project (takes approximately 15 minutes).

What happens next?

Once completing your registration, the Allied Health Research Team will contact you via email to schedule an appointment which is approximately 50 minutes, in NCHER or via Teams. The appointment is with at least two experienced allied health researchers, including Associate Professor Adam Semciw. Additional members may include a biostatistician, allied health research lead and/or an ethics representative, depending on your research project requirements and phase.

Contact our team if you would like any further information prior to scheduling an appointment 😊

<https://redcap.nh.org.au/surveys/?s=JN4RRT8MA4>



Carolyn Dun - Professional Leader Occupational Therapy – Mental Health**1. What led you to completing research and what was your role at the time?**

I was working as a psychosocial disability support service (PDS) manager in 2000. At the time, the recovery model was starting to influence policy in the non-government sector. I was curious about the role of staff in promoting consumers' recovery process and after chatting to a colleague, I decided to complete an advanced Master of Occupational Therapy Practice (research and course work). For the research I explored staff perspectives in metropolitan Melbourne on their understanding of recovery and how PDS services and staff promote recovery. This sparked further interests in research. With the support of a La Trobe University supervisor, and later NWMH Occupational Therapy Research and Translation Lead, I was encouraged to complete further research. I have since led various projects, collaborated with others, supervised Honours students, obtained grant funding for a sensory project, assisted in a scoping review and the like!

**2. Congratulations on receiving the “Excellence in Research and Quality Improvement Award” at the NH 2024 Allied Health Excellence Awards last year. Can you tell us more about your work within the Northern Area Mental health service/ Drive Safe Program at Northern Health?**

In 2005, I was aware many consumers were driving a motor vehicle, and we weren't asking about it in practice. Findings from our scoping review with community mental health services found 1 in 3 clinicians surprisingly did not know about consumer's driving status. Many carers also expressed concerns around driving. This started the journey of exploring how we can build staff capacity and research in this space. In the past year, not only has some of this work been published and presented at various forums but driving guidelines are now available on the [NH website](#). Driving is important for everyday occupation and independence and I'm very passionate about continuing conversations about consumers' community access and what we can do to support it.

3. You have talked a lot about consumer-led research – how has this impacted your work?

I believe consumer and carer co-designed research is key to asking and answering the right questions. I have worked with consumer, and carer staff focusing on driving and involving lived experience perspectives from the start helps to think about consumer and carer needs, knowing the right questions to ask and language to use. For e.g., interviewing participants; the clinician lens is removed and nuanced interactions often seem to be better understood.

4. What is next for you in the research space?

Delta Pet therapy dogs will be introduced in Mental Health Division's 4 adult inpatient wards in coming weeks. We are keen to explore the impact of pet therapy on consumers and staff and the ward's therapeutic milieu. I will also continue supervising an Honours student (La Trobe University), who will explore the role of Occupational Therapy in Prevention and Recovery Care services.

5. Do you have any advice for clinicians considering research or grants in the future?

Say 'YES' to opportunities if it feels right; the more you do, the more you may be asked to partake in. Reach out to others and collaborate. Aim to build evidence with questions from the ground, so that you have practical research that can make a difference when translated. Learn through doing. Last but not least, make sure you get research support/supervision to guide you.

Conference news

Well done again to all Allied Health, who presented more than 65 conference presentations both nationally and internationally in 2024. Please see upcoming conferences below – if you would like advice in submitting an abstract or are curious about ethics approvals required prior to presenting your work, please reach out to the Allied Health Research Team. 😊

March-April	The Australian Pain Society (APS) conference (Allied Health) - April https://dccam.com.au/aps2025/
May onwards	- Dietitians Unite 2025 (Dietetics) – May; - OTA 31st National Conference and Exhibition (Occupational Therapy) – June; https://otaus.com.au/cpds/ota-31st-national-conference-and-exhibition-2025 https://dietitianconnection.com/event/dietitians-unite-2025/ - National Allied Health Conference (Allied Health) – August; https://nahc.com.au/ - Pan-Asian Consortium for Treatment and Research in ALS (PACTALS) and biennial 12th MND Australia Care Forum (Allied Health) – September; https://www.pactalscongress.com/registration - APASC25 – Lead the physiotherapy evolution (Physiotherapy) – October; https://australian.physio/pd/conferences

Have you attended a conference recently or presenting in future?

Northern Health recommends staff who attend conferences share relevant knowledge and resources to their relevant teams when taking conference leave. If you have news to share, please use this platform and get in touch with Emily.farrugia@nh.org.au for the next edition.

Cartoon Of The Quarter



ALLIED HEALTH RESEARCH REPORT 2024

EXPANSION OF ALLIED HEALTH RESEARCH TEAM

Welcoming the appointment of a Post Doctorate Research Fellow – Virtual Health Services in partnership with La Trobe University



2 PHD'S

Congratulations to:
Stephen Quick (Allied Health Research)
Hannah Silva (Dietetics)

>65 CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Spreading Northern Health Allied Health research both nationally and internationally



>\$1.95M IN GRANT FUNDING

More than 4 successful grants in support of multidisciplinary research and quality improvement across falls and virtual emergency services

37 PUBLICATIONS

Across allied health, including three publications from the Stepping Into Research program



Building research capacity, capability and confidence into 2025

See full Allied Health Research Report 2024 for further details

BY ADAM SEMCIW, HAZEL HENG + EMILY FARRUGIA

Publications (January-March)

1. **Quick, S. M., Sharma, B., Wotherspoon, S. B., Suleiman, M., Jessup, R. L.** (2025). Family Violence Presentations to a Metropolitan Emergency Department During COVID-19: A Retrospective Audit. *Australian Social Work*, 1–9.
2. **Quick, S.M.**, Lawler, K., Shannon, M.M., Soh, S-E., McGinley, J.L., Peiris, C.L., Snowdon, D.A., Callisaya, M.L. (2025). Reply to letter to the editor regarding article, “Physiotherapy students are underprepared to work with people living with dementia: a qualitative study” *Physiotherapy*, Volume 126, 1.
3. Wong, D., Sanders, L. M., Beauchamp, A., Formby, C., Smith, E. E., Hansen, C., **McKinley, K.**, De Jongh, K., & Borschmann, K. (2025). “When the Word Is Too Big, It’s Just Too Hard”: Stroke Survivors’ Perspectives About Health Literacy and Delivery of Health Information. *Healthcare*, 13(5), 541.

Congratulations to all published authors at Northern Health! Please get in touch with our team:

AH.Research@nh.org.au if you would like to flag a future publication.