



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Department of
Rural Health



University Department of Rural Health

Excellence and equity in Rural Health through education, research and engagement

Research

The University Department of Rural Health undertakes a range of rural health research. Our research focuses on three key areas: (1) Rural health workforce, (2) Rural chronic illness, and (3) Culturally inclusive rural health care. We also have our Rural Health Academic Network who are researchers based in small health services. All our research projects are conducted in partnership with health services and local communities and we appreciate their collaboration.

Nursing and Allied Health Workforce

Nursing and Allied Health Students:

The UDRH support 1400 nursing and allied health students to undertake a clinical placement in a rural area. Evaluation of these placement experiences enables improvement and identification of quality placements. Detailed evaluation of our service learning placements has been undertaken. A longitudinal follow-up of these students is underway.

Student perspectives: As a placement, a social work student interviewed 18 nursing and allied health students about barriers and enablers of students going rural for their clinical placements. Financial support, good supervision, a welcoming health service and flexibility from the host university were identified as key enablers.

Retention project: A project has been developed to provide whole-of-person support to new allied health professionals

at two rural health services. Evaluating Dr Cosgrave's theory of retention, this action research project is supporting new staff through their initial years of employment.

Student intentions and practice after they have completed Cultural Safety training: A research project is following up students who completed our cultural training to assess the impact years after completing the training.



Key Publications

Bolte, Keryn and Lisa Bourke (2017) Rural health workforce development: Student placement project. *Australian Nursing and Midwifery Journal* 25(5): 40.

Cosgrave, C., Maple, M., & Hussain, R. (2018) An explanation of turnover intention among early-career nursing and allied health professionals working in rural and remote Australia: Findings from a grounded theory study. *Rural & Remote Health*, https://www.rrh.org.au/journal/early_abstract/4511.

Cosgrave, C., Maple, M., & Hussain, R. (2018) Work challenges negatively affecting the job satisfaction of early career community mental health professionals working in rural Australia: Findings from a qualitative study. *Journal of Mental Health Training, Education and Practice*. doi:10.1108/JMHTEP-02-2017-0008.

Cosgrave, C., Maple, M., & Hussain, R. (2017). Factors affecting job satisfaction of Aboriginal mental health workers working in community mental health in rural and remote New South Wales. *Australian Health Review*, 41(6) 707-711.

Wakerman, John, Lisa Bourke, John S. Humphreys and Judy Taylor (2017) Is remote health different to rural health? *Rural and Remote Health* 17(2).

Research at the Department of Rural Health

Rural Health Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Trialling ways to improve training of the future rural health workforce ■ Understanding recruitment and retention 	➔	OUTCOME Bigger rural workforce Better trained
Rural Chronic Ill-health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identifying chronic illness and service needs across our regions' population ■ Trialling new clinical/behavioural approaches to improve care for rural people with a chronic illness 	➔	OUTCOME Better management of chronic illness
Culturally Inclusive Rural Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Giving a voice to rural residents in our regions who struggle to access appropriate care ■ Working with health services to improve client/patient access, engagement and inclusion 	➔	OUTCOME Greater access to services for marginalised groups

The UDRH acknowledge the Australian Government Department of Health for funding through the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training programme.

Rural Chronic Ill-health

Crossroads II: A research study is repeating a population health survey and clinical assessment of a random sample of residents from Shepparton, Mooroopna, Cobram, Benalla and Seymour. This NHMRC partnership project with 10 local partners will assess access to services, utilisation of services, rates of key conditions and rates of undiagnosed disease.

Other projects include:

- Systematic review of patterns of referral in chronic disease in Australia, NZ, Canada and UK
- NHW and PHN integrated care for COPD, diabetes and heart failure, and the patient journey
- Perception of overweight and obesity
- Preferred language regarding overweight and obesity

Key Publications

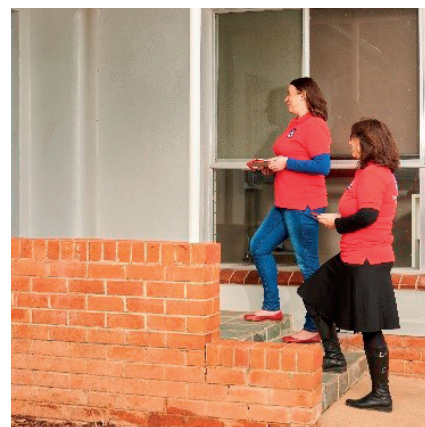
Glenister, Kristen M., Christina Malatzky and Julian R. Wright (2017) Barriers to effective conversations regarding overweight and obesity in regional Victoria. *Australian Family Physician* 46(10): 769-773.

Haines, Helen M., Cynthia Opie, David Pierce and Lisa Bourke (2017). Notwithstanding High Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity, Smoking Remains the Most Important Factor in Poor Self-rated Health and Hospital Use in an Australian Regional Community. *AIMS Public Health*, 4(4): 402-417.

Opie, Cynthia, Helen Haines, Kaye Ervin, Kristen Glenister and David Pierce (2017). Why Australia needs to define obesity as a chronic condition. *BMC Public Health*, 17 doi:10.1186/s12889-017-4434-1

Smith, T.A., R.T. Disler, C.R. Jenkins, J.M. Ingham and P.M. Davidson (2017) Perspectives on advance care planning among patients recently requiring non-invasive ventilation for acute respiratory failure: A qualitative study using thematic analysis. *Palliative Medicine*, 31(6), 566-574. doi:10.1177/0269216316670286.

Wright, Julian R., Kristen Glenister, R. Thwaites and Daniel Terry. (2018) The importance of adequate referrals for chronic kidney disease management in a regional Australian area of nephrologist workforce shortage. *Australian Journal of General Practice* 47(1-2): 58-62.



Culturally Inclusive Rural Health Care

This research stream is about increasing access to services and improving the experience of health care for rural consumers who are often marginalised. Because there is a limited number of health services in rural areas, they need to cater for all people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, residents not born in Australia, people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gender, intersex or queer, those with low English literacy, young people, residents with disability, those from low socioeconomic neighbourhoods and others regularly excluded from health services.

Development of a toolkit: An ARC funded study is undertaking four case studies to understand how rural mainstream health services can increase their inclusiveness and responsiveness to the needs of diverse and particularly marginalised consumers.

Other projects include:

- Evaluation of Cultural Audits in Rural Health Services
- The Gana Burrari Research
- Engagement in an Aboriginal prosperity plan
- A Common Agenda for Indigenous Health policy

Key Publications

Malatzky, Christina and Lisa Bourke (2017) When the social meets health in rural Australia: Confronting the disconnect. *Health Sociology Review* 26(2): 190-203.

Terry, Daniel, Kaye Ervin, Alan Crouch, Kristen Glenister and Lisa Bourke (2017) Heterogeneity of rural consumer perceptions of health service access across four regions of Victoria. *Journal of Rural Social Science* 32(2): 125-145.



Rural Health Academic Network (RHAN)

A team of jointly-funded academics are based in five rural health services. As a network, this team works to support education and build research capacity in these services. In doing so, this team undertakes a range of evaluations, service development projects and supports the rural health workforce in research and professional development. Team members are interested in allied health workforce, maternity care, chronic conditions, aged care and the prevalence of obesity in rural areas.

Key Publications

Opie, Cynthia A., Alison Koschel and Kaye E. Ervin, Lynette Jeffreson and Helen M. Haines (2017). Supportive care screening in rural ambulatory cancer care [online]. *The Australian Journal of Cancer Nursing*, Vol. 18 (2): 3-9.

Ervin Kaye, Irene Blackberry and Helen Haines (2017) Developing a Taxonomy and Mapping Concepts of Shared Decision Making to Improve Clinicians Understanding. *Nursing and Care Open Access Journal* 3(1): 00063.

Terry, Daniel, Kaye Ervin, E. Soutter, R Spiller, N.D. Nogare and Andrew J. Hamilton (2017). Do Not "Let Them Eat Cake": Correlation of Food-Consumption Patterns among Rural Primary School Children from Welfare and Non-Welfare Households, *International Journal Of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14 (1): 10.





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The University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) seeks to work with local health services and communities to support the health workforce, increase access to services for consumers and improve quality of care.

We work across northeast Victoria and the Grampians region in partnership with local health services.

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