



PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

The foundation of a strong health system

www.cphce.unsw.edu.au

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UNSW
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Equity of access, coordination and continuity of care, health promotion and behaviour change, integration of disease prevention into clinical care, a concern for population as well as individual health, community involvement and the use of appropriate technology



Professor Mark Harris



Professor Nick Zwar



Professor Robyn Richmond

Primary Health care seeks to extend the first level of health system from sick care to the development of health

Primary Health Care research is a major strength of the School through staff located at the School's affiliated Research Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity (CPHCE) and through researchers located within the School and the General Practice at Fairfield Hospital.

CPCHE has research under the following themes:

Prevention and management of Chronic Disease

This theme encompasses research, which focuses on improving the quality of care and health outcomes for primary health care patients with specific chronic diseases especially diabetes, cardiovascular disease, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). This includes evaluation of strategies in the Chronic Illness Model especially self management support,

decision support and information systems. Underlying this disease and prevention aspect is a focus on the organisation and capacity required to improve the quality of care in primary health care. The prevention of chronic disease is also a priority, particularly in relation to the SNAP behavioural risk factors (Smoking, Nutrition, Alcohol and Physical Activity) and the physiological risk factors (hypertension, dyslipidaemia, impaired glucose metabolism and obesity). Interventions being evaluated include the assessment of the absolute risk of cardiovascular disease in clinical practice and interventions within primary health care to reduce risk and prevent chronic disease.

Primary Health Care System Development

This stream is focused on developing and evaluating the conceptual frameworks, infrastructure and capacity needed for a strong Primary Health Care system; improving collaboration between and integration of services and continuity of care; and access to primary health care including evaluation of patterns of access using linked data from registers, population surveys and administrative data sets.

Understanding and intervening to reduce Health Inequalities

Work on the Equity theme is primarily located within the Centre for Health Equity Training, Research and Evaluation (CHETRE) at Liverpool. There are currently three main program areas within this stream: Early Childhood, Healthy Public Policy and Practice, and Disadvantaged Communities and Populations (including unemployed people). The focus of this theme is on the development and implementation of interventions that will prevent or redress the impact of health inequalities. Research projects include a cohort study of urban Aboriginal children (Gudaga), a trial of intensive home visiting for at risk mothers and their infants and an extensive program of research and development on Health Impact Assessment in NSW, across Australia, and as part of international collaborations overseas.

Details of this work and project descriptions are available at <http://www.cphce.unsw.edu.au>. An important addition to the research strength of the Primary Health Care group is the appointment in 2009 of Professor Teng Liaw as Professor of General Practice and Director of the General Practice Unit at Fairfield Hospital. Professor Liaw has a national and international reputation in research in health informatics and his appointment will further enhance the University of New South Wales' capacity in this area. Teng's research expertise also involves using mixed methods to examine clinical, health systems and health informatics research in the areas of chronic disease management and quality use of medicines.



Dr Suzanne McKenzie



Dr Meredith Makeham



Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver

Primary Health Care Research within the School of Public Health and Community Medicine

Within the School itself the researchers working on Primary Health Care Research are closely linked to CPHCE and are also involved in collaborations with other members of the School, with others in the Faculty of Medicine and with other universities. The focus of the work is on management of chronic disease and prevention, including intervention of risk factors for chronic illness such as tobacco smoking.

Management of Chronic Disease

Primary health care academics within the School are leading or involved in projects on improved care of chronic illness. These projects include:

- Nurse and general practice partnership for care of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Early diagnosis and intervention for COPD
- Systematic review of interventions for care of chronic disease in primary health care
- Multidisciplinary teamwork for chronic disease care
- Advance care planning
- Improved care of atrial fibrillation to prevent stroke.

All of these projects address health conditions of high prevalence and impact where improved care in the community has the potential for important health benefit for the population.

Prevention including intervention on Behavioural Risk Factors

Tobacco smoking remains the most common preventable cause of death and illness in Australia today. Smoking cessation programs are some of the most effective and cost effective strategies that can be undertaken in health care settings, including general practice. Nicholas Zwar and Robyn Richmond are leading a project to develop and test the role of general practice nurse to provide smoking cessation advice. This project, which builds on twenty years of research by Professor Richmond on smoking cessation intervention in general practice, tests a new approach to supporting smoking cessation in primary care. This involves the practice nurse, GP and Quitline working in partnership to provide a flexible program of support to meet the needs of smokers. Primary Care group staff are also involved in projects on absolute cardiovascular risk assessment in general practice, vascular disease prevention and lifestyle risk factor management in the 45-49 year old health check in general practice.

Aboriginal Health

The Primary Care Group are working in collaboration with Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver to evaluate an Indigenous Community Health Brokerage Service in South West Sydney.

Primary Health Care Policy

Nick Zwar has led a team to perform a systematic review on optimising skill-mix in the primary health care workforce for care of older Australians. The issue of distribution of roles and responsibilities is an important policy and practice question given the major problems with health workforce.

Patient Safety

Meredith Makeham is the Chief Investigator of the Threats to Australian Patient Safety (TAPS), which was involved in the investigation of reports of error from the communities, establishing the incidence report of error in General Practice settings and developing a taxonomy to describe the nature of reported errors in General Practice. She is also involved in collaborative work with the Department of Health and Ageing, NSW Health, RACGP and divisions of General Practice.

Further information and opportunities for Independent Learning Project, Masters and PhD students

For more detailed information about the streams of prevention management of chronic disease, primary health care policy and health equity see the CPHCE website or contact one of the members of the group. For further information about projects in tobacco control contact Professor Robyn Richmond (r.richmond@unsw.edu.au).

A Masters of Public Health in Primary Health Care is available. This course is designed for students who wish to specialise in primary health care. Students must complete 48 UOC.

For more information about the Primary Health Care Plan, view the School's Postgraduate Program Prospectus at <http://www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/SPHCMWeb.nsf/page/PH>

We also propose to offer short courses and to develop a Graduate Certificate in Primary Health Care in the near future.

Proposed structure of Primary Health Care Plan

CORE COURSES:

PHCM9012 Health Promotion and Social Perspectives of Health	(6 UOC)
PHCM9498 Epidemiology and Statistics	(6 UOC)
PHCM9516 Introduction to Public Health	(6 UOC)

PLUS:

PHCM9615 Principles and Practice of Primary Health Care in the Community	(6 UOC)
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PLUS AT LEAST 18 UOC FROM:

PHCM9010 Community Development	(6 UOC)
PHCM9108 Program Design and Evaluation	(6 UOC)
PHCM9120 Qualitative Research Methods	(6 UOC)
PHCM9604 Alcohol and Other Drug Issues	(3 UOC)
PHCM9630 Indigenous Health in Australia	(6 UOC)
PHCM9633 Tobacco Control	(3 UOC)
PHCM9751 Public Health Management and Professional Practice	(6 UOC)

OPTIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT:

PHCM9148 Project in Primary Health Care	(6 UOC)
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TOTAL	(48 UOC)
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PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Contact us

Learn more about Primary Health Care and Equity at the School of Public Health and Community Medicine and at the Research Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity

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