Project 1: The health of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia

**Supervisors:** Professor Grant Russell, Dr Hao Cheng, Dr Jenny Advocat, Dr Sayed Wahidi

**Project Description:**

Each year Australia permanently resettles approximately 13,750 Refugees and other Humanitarian Entrants. A significant proportion of them settle in the south eastern metropolitan region of Melbourne.

Refugee populations may suffer from many complex, acute, chronic and preventable health conditions related to their refugee experiences. They encounter difficulties accessing health services on account language differences, cultural misunderstandings and socioeconomic disadvantage. Their health needs are inadequately addressed by the Australian health system.

Designed in conjunction with the student’s interests, this project will aim to better understand an aspect of refugee or asylum seeker health or healthcare need. Research questions may relate to: population epidemiology, health service experiences, quality of care, health literacy, health seeking behaviour, access to care or the coordination of care.

The student will be assisted to identify and articulate a suitable research question, conduct a literature review, submit a successful ethics application and collect and analyse data. Qualitative, quantitative or mixed research methods will be selected according to the nature of the student’s research question.

The student will work with supervisors experienced in refugee and asylum seeker health research and delivery in Australia and be exposed to wider experts through the region’s Refugee Health Research Consortium.

After completion of the thesis the student will have the option of being supported beyond the BMedSc year to submit their findings for publication in a suitable journal.

At SAPCRU we are keen to build capacity within our junior staff. All BMedSc students at SAPCRU will be supported with $2500 to go toward miscellaneous project costs and conference travel.

**Contact:** i-hao.cheng@monash.edu
Project 2: Young people, mental health and primary care at headspace Dandenong

**Supervisors:** Professor Grant Russell, Dr Jenny Advocat

**Project Description:**

SAPCRU partners with headspace Dandenong to develop a project with one BMedSc student in 2015. Using mixed methods (such as in depth interviewing, non-participant observations, surveys, chart audits or other methods to be decided), this project can be shaped to suit the interests of both headspace Dandenong and the student. The project may relate to an ongoing evaluation that SAPCRU is involved in of the Afghan Youth Engagement project or it may involve the evaluation of another upcoming program with young people run by headspace Dandenong. Other ideas include an investigation of the scope and role of GPs working in headspace or an ethnographic study that examines a fundamental principle of headspace: “Is headspace Dandenong youth friendly?” This project will allow the student to follow his or her passion and work closely with both experienced researchers at SAPCRU as well as experienced clinicians at headspace to make a real difference to the delivery of mental health services for young people in Dandenong and beyond.

All BMedSc students at SAPCRU will be supported with $2500 to go toward miscellaneous project costs and conference travel.

**Contact:** jenny.advocat@monash.edu
Project 3: Is primary care in Australia as good as it can be? An international comparison

Supervisors: Professor Grant Russell, Dr Jean-Fred Levesque, Dr Riki Lane

Project Description:

Vulnerable populations face considerable barriers in getting the sort of primary care that they require. Canada and Australia are two of many countries trying to improve their systems for delivering primary healthcare. Experts in both countries have devoted much time and effort into schemes to improve the quality of care delivered by health care providers. However those at most risk are still unable to access quality care. It’s a problem that is going to be even more significant if Australia introduces compulsory GP co-payments.

Our international Centre of Research Excellence, Innovative models promoting access to care transformation” (IMPACT), will discover and trial world’s best practice innovations to help vulnerable people (ie the poor, refugees and people from indigenous communities) access the primary care that fits their needs. This exciting BMedSc project will work to identify those external factors that may influence the success of these innovations.

The project will involve working with a team examining important and unique international data bases. These represent grouped results from the Commonwealth Fund international health policy survey (http://www.commonwealthfund.org) and the Quality and Costs in Primary Care survey (QUALICOPC https://www.nivel.nl/en/qualicopc). Each survey aims to analyse and compare primary health care systems in different nations.

Under the guidance of international experts, the student working on this project will work with the data to answer questions related to our key objective: “Which health systems have better access than others and which population groups are receiving better access to health care than others? The outcomes of this project will help to inform the design of the interventions that will subsequently be trialled within the IMPACT program.

At SAPCRU we are keen to build capacity within our junior staff. Through this project you will receive exposure to international health systems through participation in meetings with health experts in the Canadian and Australian health systems. All BMedSc students at SAPCRU will also be supported with $2500 to go toward miscellaneous project costs and conference travel. In addition, this project will require a field visit of up to 2 weeks to our co-investigators at New South Wales’ Bureau of Health Information. (http://www.bhi.nsw.gov.au/).

Contact: grant.russell@monash.edu
Project 4: The right care at the right time in the right place: A primary care intervention for vulnerable people

**Supervisors:** Professor Grant Russell, Dr Jenny Advocat

**Project Description:**

Getting access to primary health care is important for everyone, but not everyone can find care that matches their needs. The “Innovative models promoting access to care transformation” (IMPACT) Centre of Research Excellence is a collaboration between Australia and Canada that aims to generate organisational innovations to promote access to primary health care for vulnerable populations.

Even though the Australian health system has prioritised access to effective and high-quality health meaningful gaps in equitable primary care still exist. These gaps particularly effect vulnerable groups such as the poor, refugees and indigenous communities. As a consequence poor access to health care translates into unmet needs for care, delayed or inappropriate treatments and avoidable emergency department consultations and hospitalisations.

The IMPACT program is cultivating a network of innovation partnerships between decision makers, researchers and community members in three Australian states (Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia). Our research teams work with these partnerships to find the best ways to improve access to primary health care for those at most risk.

With guidance and mentorship from experts in Australia and Canada, the BMedSc student will design and undertake a case study comparison of how the three health systems address their identified access problems. You may choose to focus on a vulnerable population, investigate organisational factors that influence decision-makers or another area of your interest. This project will enable a student to pursue a topic of their own interest whilst receiving strong support from an international research team.

At SAPCRU we are keen to build capacity within our junior staff. All BMedSc students at SAPCRU will be supported with $2500 to go toward miscellaneous project costs and conference travel.

**Contact:** [grant.russell@monash.edu](mailto:grant.russell@monash.edu)
Project 5: Searching for the Holy Grail in primary care: How do models of integrated primary health care centres impact on access and integration of care?

**Supervisors:** Professor Grant Russell, Dr Riki Lane

**Project description:**

Increasing rates of chronic illness within an ageing population require increasingly accessible and well Integrated Primary Health Care (PHC).

The Australian PHC Research Institute has funded the “Integrated Primary Health Care Centres (IPHCC): A multiple methods comparative case study”, which will show how successful different types of IPHCCs are at maximising access and integrating care, the strategies they use and how this can be supported through policy.

Case study methodology will be used to describe the approaches (systems, arrangements and organisational routines) that IPHCCs use, with a particular focus on people with chronic conditions. The project will also identify the factors that influence the choice of these approaches and their impact on access and integration of care. The case study methodology will involve site visits to up to 8 IPHCCs in Victoria, NSW and SA.

With support and expertise from experienced researchers, you will have the opportunity to conduct site visits to 1-2 IPHCCs. You would undertake a) interviews with centre clinicians, management and other staff, external stakeholders including other PHC providers, and consumer groups, b) observations of routines and staff interactions, c) reviews of documents and administrative data, and d) a staff survey. Site visits will be supplemented by phone interviews.

You would conduct within-case analysis of the data for these IPHCC’s and cross-case analysis with other IPHCCs. Analysis of these sites would be a discrete section of the study that would be the subject of your thesis, and would also make an important contribution to the broader project.

At SAPCRU we are keen to build capacity within our junior staff. All BMedSc students at SAPCRU will be supported with $2500 to go toward miscellaneous project costs and conference travel.

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5. Contact us

SAPCRU encourages prospective students to meet and discuss their questions with the potential supervisors. Please feel welcome to contact us at:

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