



Government of **Western Australia**
WA Country Health Service

WACHS Research Governance

Summaries of Approved Projects
January to June 2020

ED-CO-21-247789 (approved 9/7/2021)

Approved Projects - January to June 2020

Research Governance is a two-stage process involving ethical review by a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) registered with the National Health and Medical Research Council followed by institutional authorisation. A research project is unable to commence until both ethical approval and institutional authorisation have been obtained.

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) maintains its own HREC (EC00261) and also recognises ethical approval by an accredited lead HREC of other WA Health Service Providers and HREC's certified under the National Mutual Acceptance scheme. This report contains a list of research projects that have received WACHS HREC approval and/or WACHS institutional authorisation (at least one site) during the reporting period January to June 2020. [Appendix 1](#) provides additional project details including any WACHS site-specific authorisations prior to the reporting period and/or pending site approvals.

Ethics Review: WACHS HREC Approved Projects

Title	WACHS region(s)
2020.01 – WA Health COVID-19 Patient Clinician Contact Audit	South West
2020.02 – Great Southern Memory Clinic	Great Southern
2020.03 – Management of ectopic pregnancy during the early phase of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in rural Australia	Goldfields
RGS3419 - A community and health system partnership to reduce hospitalisation and improve outcomes through a Compassionate Communities Model of End of Life Care	South West
RGS3424 - Longitudinal study of remote Indigenous children: the <i>Bigiswun Kid*</i> Project	Kimberley
RGS3608 - Cervical screening in pregnancy	South West
RGS3941 - Nurse Escorts' perceptions of their ability to manage patient clinical deterioration during nurse led interhospital ambulance transfer in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia: A mixed method study	Central Office, Wheatbelt

Institutional Authorisation: WACHS Approved Projects

Title	WACHS region(s) with approved site(s)
RGS2123 – Short period incidence study of severe acute respiratory infection SPRINT-SARI	South West
RGS3076 - Assessing the effectiveness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of rural and remote telehealth implementation: Part B – WACHS Qualitative and Quantitative	Central Office
RGS3092 - Access to Services for the Management of Lymphoedema in Western Australia	Great Southern, Goldfields, Midwest, Pilbara, Wheatbelt
RGS3419 – A community and health system partnership to reduce hospitalization and improve outcomes through a Compassionate Communities Model for End of Life Care	South West
RGS3599 - Occupational therapists' perspectives on the factors influencing Occupational Therapy education for stroke survivors and their caregivers, along the continuum of care in Western Australia	Central Office
RGS3608 - Cervical screening in pregnancy	South West
RGS3683 – Facilitating best practice dementia care in hospitals: Evaluation of the Dementia Change Champions Project	Great Southern, Pilbara
RGS3723 - The compliance with Group B Streptococcus Screening amongst Pregnant Women in Western Australia - A Quantitative Study	Kimberley, South West, Wheatbelt
RGS3786 - Evaluation of a Neurology Outreach teleconference teaching programme for metropolitan, rural and remote clinicians in Australia	Goldfields, Kimberley, South West
RGS3941 - Nurse escorts' perceptions of their ability to manage patient clinical deterioration during nurse led interhospital ambulance transfer in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia: A mixed method study	Central Office, Wheatbelt

Appendix 1 – Project Details

2020.01 – WA Health COVID-19 Patient Clinician Contact Audit

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Dr. David Baguley (WACHS)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	As above		
WACHS Region(s)	South West		
Project Summary	This cross site audit plans to collect data on any occasion that an anaesthetist is involved in the care of a COVID-19 confirmed or suspected patient. This may include intubation for patients needing escalation to ICU level care, providing anaesthesia in the operating theatre/procedural areas or care for obstetric patients. The audit aims to record the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), compliance with local intubation protocols and identify any factors that may have contributed to virus transmission in the event of a health care worker becoming infected after caring for a patient with COVID-19. The key findings of this audit will be used to provide a system by which the experiences of anaesthetists can be shared ensuring up to date, best practice techniques.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	WACHS HREC		
Approval Date	12/5/2020	Expiry Date	12/5/2023
Note	This is a non-research Quality Assurance project at Bunbury Hospital that sought WACHS HREC approval for journal publication.		

2020.02 – Great Southern Memory Clinic

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Dr. Noel Collins (WACHS)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	As above, Ms Dianne van Clark		
WACHS Region(s)	Great Southern		
Project Summary	This project seeks to understand if there is a local appetite for a new memory clinic in the Great Southern that will be linked to existing services. The survey explores the experiences and needs of patients experiencing memory loss and those of their families and carers. The key findings from the survey responses will be collated to identify common themes and presented in a report to WACHS, MHC and WA Primary Health Alliance to seek funding if required.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	WACHS HREC		
Approval Date	2/6/2020	Ethics Expiry	Not provided
Note	This is a non-research project (stakeholder consultation for service planning) at Great Southern Mental Health Service (Albany) that sought consultation with the WACHS HREC.		

2020.03 – Management of ectopic pregnancy during the early phase of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in rural Australia

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Dr. Ljiljana Ilic-Jeftic (WACHS)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	As above, Dr Charlotte Moss, Dr Italo Zamudio-Villarroel		
WACHS Region(s)	Goldfields		
Project Summary	Ectopic pregnancy is a potentially life-threatening condition and remains a major cause of maternal morbidity and mortality. Historically, surgical approaches have been the gold standard treatment, however advances in early diagnosis has allowed for other treatment options including medical therapy and conservative management. In the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic there are many challenges that may be faced when managing ectopic pregnancy. This case report describes the treatment plan for a COVID-19 positive patient with an ectopic pregnancy in a rural Australian hospital. This case study will be submitted to Obstetrics and Gynecology Journal RANZCOG and Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Journal AAIC for publication.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	WACHS HREC		
Approval Date	23/6/2020	Ethics Expiry	23/6/2021
Note	This non-research case report from the Kalgoorlie Health Campus sought WACHS HREC approval for journal publication.		

RGS2123 – Short period incidence study of severe acute respiratory infection SPRINT-SARI

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Professor Steven Webb (Royal Perth Hospital)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	Ms Marie Draper, Dr Ravi Krishnamurthy		
WACHS Region(s)	South West		
Project Summary	Severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) continues to be of major relevance to public health worldwide. The main aim of this study is to establish a research response capability for future epidemics and pandemics through a global SARI observational surveillance study. The secondary aim of this study is to describe the clinical epidemiology and microbiology profiles of patients with SARI. The tertiary aim of this study is to assess the Ethics, Administrative, Regulatory and Logistic (EARL) barriers to conducting pandemic research on a global level. This is an international multicentre, prospective, short period incidence observational study of patients admitted to participating hospitals and intensive care units (ICUs) with SARI. Recent outbreaks of pandemic influenza viruses, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (SARSCoV), and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERSCoV) have revealed that there is a significant time lag between the start of a disease outbreak and the availability of the data needed to inform clinical management and public health interventions. By creating pre-existing tools, identifying and overcoming barriers to such projects and establishing networks for global observational data collection we hope, through SPRINTSARI, to be better prepared for the next outbreak, informing clinicians and decision-makers around the possibility for patients to be identified by anybody other than the site study member surveillance.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	Royal Perth Hospital HREC		
Approval Date	24/8/2016	Ethics Expiry	24/8/2022
Institutional Authorisation			
Approved	7/5/2020 - South West (Bunbury Hospital)		

RGS3076 – Assessing the effectiveness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of rural and remote telehealth implementation: Part B – WACHS Qualitative and Quantitative

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Ms Christina Tsou (Curtin University and WACHS)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	As above, Ms Anita John, Ms Kylie Bosich, Dr Justin Yeung, Ms Stephanie Waters		
WACHS Region(s)	All Regions, Central Office		
Project Summary	This industry driven project aims to provide evidence that will support the future planning and implementation of telehealth services in Western Australia. This project will explore the barriers and enablers of telehealth use to support the delivery of clinical services and improve health service utilisation. Additionally, the project looks to examine whether the use of telehealth services is efficient in creating cost savings to both the health system and society in general in comparison to non-telehealth scenarios. The evidence generated from this research will be used to influence decision makers and assist in informing allocation decisions relating to telehealth delivery and implementation in rural and remote settings.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	WACHS HREC		
Approval Date	14/8/2019	Ethics Expiry	14/8/2022
Institutional Authorisation			
Approved	31/1/2020 - Central Office		
Note	Approval has not yet been granted for the following sites: All Regions (All sites)		

RGS3092– Access to Services for the Management of Lymphoedema in Western Australia

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Ms. Robyn Paterson (Flinders University)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	Not applicable		
WACHS Region(s)	All regions		
Project Summary	This Australia first study will examine the accessibility of W.A. lymphoedema services from the perspective of consumers and therapists. There is strong anecdotal indication that there is an imbalance between consumer demands and lymphedema management resources in Western Australia and that accessing available resources can be difficult and expensive. A state-wide recruitment drive aims to develop a thematic analysis based upon data collected via surveys, interviews and focus groups. This study will make a valuable contribution to international and national knowledge of this under examined area and provide a comprehensive and rich overview of the accessibility of lymphedema management services.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	South Metropolitan Health Service HREC		
Approval Date	26/7/2019	Ethics Expiry	26/7/2024
Institutional Authorisation			
Approved	19/3/2020 - Goldfields (Kalgoorlie Health Campus, Esperance Hospital), Great Southern (Albany Hospital), Midwest (Geraldton Hospital), Pilbara (Hedland Health Campus), Wheatbelt (Northam Health Service)		
Note	Approval has not yet been granted for the following sites: Kimberley (Broome Health Campus), Midwest (Carnarvon Health Campus), South West (Bunbury Hospital, Busselton Hospital)		

RGS3419 – A community and health system partnership to reduce hospitalization and improve outcomes through a Compassionate Communities Model for End of Life Care

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Professor Samar Aoun (La Trobe University)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	Ms Piari Skeers, Ms Joanne Moore, Ms Jan Stiberc,		
WACHS Region(s)	South West		
Project Summary	This project aims to develop, implement and evaluate a model of community volunteer, identified as a Compassionate Care Connector, who can enhance patient, carer and family end of life experiences and reduce the need for patients to be admitted to hospital. This approach seeks to map and mobilise people’s personal care networks through enlisting Caring Helpers and facilitating access to formal services where necessary. Each Connector will support individuals with advanced illness and their carer/family/social network in the 12 months prior to an expected death. The Investigators aim to train up to 10 Connectors to work with at least 30 families identified by the palliative care service as requiring support. This is a pilot demonstration project that will establish models of care for replication at local, national and international levels.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	WACHS HREC		
Approval Date	24/2/2020	Ethics Expiry	24/2/2023
Institutional Authorisation			
Approved	3/4/2020 - South West (Boyup Brook Soldiers Memorial Hospital, Bridgetown District Hospital, Bunbury Hospital, Busselton Hospital, Collie Hospital, Donnybrook Hospital, Harvey Hospital, Margaret River Hospital, Nannup Hospital, Pemberton Hospital, South West Population Health Unit, South West Regional Aged Care)		
Note	Approval has not yet been granted for the following sites: South West (Augusta District Hospital, Warren Health Service)		

RGS3424 – Longitudinal study of remote Indigenous children: the *Bigiswun Kid** Project

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Dr. Lauren Rice (The University of Sydney)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	Dr Melanie Thompson, Dr Benjamin Harkin, Dr Julian Charles,		
WACHS Region(s)	Kimberley		
Project Summary	The Bigiswun project was developed in response to concerns raised by Aboriginal leaders in the Fitzroy Valley of WA about teenagers living in in very remote communities. The Investigator aims to identify modifiable predictors that determine the outcomes of the Lililwan cohort of children now they are in adolescence. This will be achieved by utilising surveys and interviews to describe the health, education and welfare status of the Lililwan cohort at 16-1 years of age. It will examine the relationships between exposure to alcohol during pregnancy, the health and neuro development of the same children at 7-9 years of age and determine whether the Lililwan project management plans were followed. Key findings from this report will be used to identify past and present service gaps and support needs to inform future policy decisions.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	WACHS HREC		
Approval Date	24/2/2020	Ethics Expiry	24/2/2023
Institutional Authorisation			
Note	Approval has not yet been granted for the following sites: Kimberley (Broome Community Health Service, Fitzroy Crossing Community Health Service, Fitzroy Crossing Hospital, Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service, Kimberley Population Health Unit)		

RGS3599 – Occupational therapists’ perspectives on the factors influencing Occupational Therapy education for stroke survivors and their caregivers, along the continuum of care in Western Australia

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Mrs. Nicole Sanders (Fiona Stanley Hospital/University of Western Australia)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	Not applicable		
WACHS Region(s)	Central Office		
Project Summary	This research aims to explore the factors influencing the Occupational Therapy (OT) education that is provided to stroke survivors and caregivers, across the continuum of care in Western Australia. The project will utilise online surveys and focus groups to investigate the extent that OTs are tailoring education for their patients' abilities and how OTs are adapting their teaching resources to meet the needs of a diverse range of stroke survivors. The key findings of this project will be analysed to determine the trends of education within the stroke survivor population and provide recommendations around the most effective educational services to enhance patient outcomes.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	South Metropolitan Health Service HREC		
Approval Date	21/4/2020	Ethics Expiry	21/4/2025
Institutional Authorisation			
Approved	23/6/2020 - Central Office		

RGS3608 – Cervical screening in pregnancy

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Dr. Sebastian Leathersich (WACHS)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	As above		
WACHS Region(s)	South West		
Project Summary	This study aims to evaluate women’s knowledge of cervical screening during pregnancy, the acceptability of this testing to them, as well as the knowledge of health practitioners surrounding cervical screening in pregnancy. This information will be used to evaluate our population’s screening behaviours between pregnancies when they are known to be due for cervical screening. This will be achieved through a retrospective analysis of STORK data for 2019 and the surveying of patients and practitioners at Bunbury Hospital.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	WACHS HREC		
Approval Date	14/1/2020	Ethics Expiry	14/1/2023
Institutional Authorisation			
Approved	27/2/2020 - South West (Bunbury Hospital)		

RGS3683 – Facilitating best practice dementia care in hospitals: Evaluation of the Dementia Change Champions Project

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Dr Pamela Nichols (Curtin University)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	Not applicable		
WACHS Region(s)	Great Southern, Pilbara		
Project Summary	The research evaluates an existing training program for hospital staff in dementia care. Health professionals working in hospitals in Western Australia who have completed the Dementia Change Champions (DCC) train-the-trainer program, facilitated by Alzheimer's WA have their details recorded in a Alzheimer's WA database. Health professionals completing the DCC Train the Trainer program were invited by Alzheimer's WA to complete an online, anonymous survey on the value of the DCC program for their role in the hospital. At the end of the survey, on a separate page, participants were invited to participate in a face-to-face interview on their experience as a DCC. They were invited to provide email and/or phone contact details so one of the research team can contact them to organise a date and time for an interview.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	South Metropolitan Health Service HREC		
Approval Date	12/12/2019	Ethics Expiry	12/12/2023
Institutional Authorisation			
Approved	19/5/2020 - Great Southern (Great Southern Regional Default), Pilbara (Pilbara Regional Default)		

RGS3723 – The compliance with Group B Streptococcus Screening amongst Pregnant Women in Western Australia - A Quantitative Study

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Mrs. Sabine Pangerl (King Edward Memorial Hospital/Edith Cowan University)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	Not applicable		
WACHS Region(s)	Kimberley, Wheatbelt, South West		
Project Summary	This project aims to retrospectively examine the compliance rate with Group B Streptococcus (GBS) screening guidelines amongst pregnant women in Western Australia using a population based quantitative methodology. It is planned that data will be collected electronically and analysed to determine any relationships between maternal demographics and GBS rates by using logistic regression. The key findings from this analysis will provide a baseline for planned future research aimed at investigating strategies to improve compliance and hospital policy in relation to GBS screening to prevent neonatal infection.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	Women and Newborn Health Service Ethics Committee		
Approval Date	3/12/2019	Ethics Expiry	3/12/2022
Institutional Authorisation			
Approved	31/1/2020 - Kimberley (Broome Health Campus), Wheatbelt (Northam Health Service), South West (Bunbury Hospital)		

RGS3786 – Evaluation of a Neurology Outreach teleconference teaching programme for metropolitan, rural and remote clinicians in Australia

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Dr Annie Bye (Sydney Children’s Hospital)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	Dr Pushpika Chandimal Gunaratne, Dr Lila Stephens, Dr Kira Kranzusch		
WACHS Region(s)	Goldfields, Kimberley, South West		
Project Summary	This study aims to understand the neurology education needs of Paediatricians and paediatric trainees at selected rural and remote sites in Queensland and Western Australia. This study will utilise a retrospective evaluation of the Neurology Outreach Teaching Programme that is currently being offered to selected sites in NSW. Based upon the findings of this evaluation, a new Neurology Outreach Programme will be designed to cater to the needs of remote and rural clinicians. The program will be delivered via teleconference during 2020 and then evaluated to ensure the identified training needs are being met.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	The Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network HREC		
Approval Date	5/2/2020	Ethics Expiry	5/2/2025
Institutional Authorisation			
Approved	9/4/2020 - South West (Bunbury Hospital), Goldfields (Kalgoorlie Health Campus), Kimberley (Broome Health Campus)		

RGS3941 – Nurse escorts’ perceptions of their ability to manage patient clinical deterioration during nurse led interhospital ambulance transfer in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia: A mixed method study

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Mrs. Sinq Mndebele (WACHS)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	As Above		
WACHS Region(s)	Central Office, Wheatbelt		
Project Summary	The Western Australian Country Health Service (WACHS) requires the ward or emergency department registered nurses to assume the responsibility of conducting inter-hospital transfers via ambulance that warrant a nurse escort. WACHS has various escalation protocols, identified tools and support systems for nurses whilst they are located within the hospitals and wards. However, despite these escalation protocols being clear in this setting, their relevance and practicality during patient transport is uncertain. This research aims to explore how well equipped WACHS registered nurses in the Wheatbelt region are in managing clinical deterioration of patients during nurse led ambulance transfers. This study will explore the self-reported skills level of these nurses, the support available during transport, the nurses’ perceptions of their role and abilities during transport and their confidence and knowledge to enact policies that govern their practice while away from the hospital setting. This study will achieve this through a mixed method approach using surveys and interviews as data collection methods.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	WACHS HREC		
Approval Date	7/5/2020	Ethics Expiry	7/5/2023
Institutional Authorisation			
Approved	9/6/2020 - Central Office, Wheatbelt (Beverley Health Service, Boddington Health Service, Bruce Rock Memorial Health Service, Corrigin Health Service, Dalwallinu Health Service, Dumbelyung Memorial Health Service, Goomalling Health Service, Jurien Bay Health Centre, Kellerberrin Memorial Health Service, Kondinin Health Service, Kununoppin Health Service, Wheatbelt Regional Office, Lake Grace Health Service, Merredin Health Service, Moora Health Service, Narembeen Memorial Health Service, Narrogin Health Service, Northam Health Service, Pingelly Health Centre, Quairading Health Service, Southern Cross Health Service, Wagin Health Service, Williams Health Centre, Wongan Health Service, Wyalkatchem-Koorda Health Service, York Health Service)		

RGS4059 – DETECT Schools Study: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 in Western Australian Schools

Coordinating Principal Investigator	Professor Peter Gething (Telethon Kids Institute)		
WACHS Researcher(s)	Mrs Margaret Abernethy, Ms Karine Miller		
WACHS Region(s)	All Regions, Central Office		
Project Summary	In response to the relaxing of public health control measures in the wake of WA’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, eighty public schools, education support centres and residential colleges reflecting a diverse range of socio-economic, educational and cultural backgrounds were invited to participate in the DETECT Schools study. The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the WA community is an unprecedented situation. With WA entering the COVID-19 recovery phase, term 2 underway, and the potential ongoing risk to child education being further disrupted, the WA Government needs urgent, evidence based information to understand how best to support WA schools, family and the community during this time. Key findings from this study will be used to inform critical health and education policy and decision making around COVID-19 in school settings by answering questions about the prevalence, transmission and psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on students, staff and parents.		
Ethics			
Lead HREC	Child and Adolescent Health Service HREC		
Approval Date	21/5/2020	Ethics Expiry	21/5/2023
Institutional Authorisation			
Approved	12/6/2020 - All Regions (All regional defaults), Central Office		