Population mental health research at the Australian National University

Centre for Mental Health Research
Research School of Population Health
History

• First research centre in social psychiatry and community mental health in Australia

Vision

• Improve the mental health of the Australian community through collaborative research
• Leadership in excellent, innovative, population-based mental health research that is relevant to policy and practice
Goals

• Excellence in research; relevance to the mental health sector and the broader population
• Focus on implementation and translation of research into policy and practice
• Building capacity: training future research leaders
• Incorporating lived experience perspectives
• Collaboration with the mental health sector
CMHR Research themes

• Mental health policy
• Translational E-mental health
• Lived experience research
• Mental health of students
• Learning and Development
• *Suicide prevention (stream)*
• *Rural mental health (stream)*

- Visual Decision Analytics Lab
Stakeholders
- Community – adults, adolescents; multiple settings (online, schools, clinical, rural, etc)
- Consumers
- Carers
- Clinicians
- Policy makers
- Researchers

Data
- Big data analysis
- Cross-sectional surveys
- Longitudinal cohorts
- Clinical trials
- Psychometric
- Qualitative
- Geospatial
- Administrative – linkage
- Economic

Multidisciplinary approaches
- Epidemiological research
- Health systems research
- Intervention research
- Implementation research
Mental Health Systems and Policy

- Integrated Atlas of Mental Health (15 PHNs in Australia)
- Service Gap Analysis
- Technical Efficiency of Catchment Areas (LGAs-PHNs)
- Development of Decision Support Systems
- Development of relational and composite indicators
- Impact analysis
- Spatial analysis

Contact: Prof Luis Salvador-Carulla
New visual tools to help policy makers and planners to grasp complex questions and guide resource allocation and planning.

What is the effect of social fragmentation in MH in Perth?

How can we improve care integration in Canberra?

Contact: Dr Nasser Bagheri
Translational e-mental health

- Identifying how people in the community engage with digital mental health programs
- Optimising connections between traditional clinical services and internet services
- Two major new NHMRC-funded projects:
  - EU partnership examining clinical referrals to e-health
  - Testing interventions to increase uptake

Contact: A/Prof Phil Batterham
Assessment of mental health

- Development of better screening tools for self assessment of mental health
- DQ5: a more accurate distress measure than K10
- New brief scales to accurately assess suicidality, anxiety disorders, psychosis, ADHD, PTSD in the community

Contact: A/Prof Phil Batterham
Mental health of students

• **Sources of Strength evaluation**
  – Social connectedness approach that utilises peer-leaders to promote adult-youth connections and positive coping
  – 16 ACT and NSW high-schools participating in an RCT
  – Assessing effects on help-seeking behaviour, adult-youth connections, social support, positive coping and suicide.

Contact: A/Prof Alison Calear
Mental health of students

- **Silence is Deadly**: evaluation in collaboration with Menslink
  - Targeted to young men and utilises traditional male role models to promote help-seeking.
  - 8 ACT schools (Year 11 and 12) participating in an RCT
  - Assessing effects on help-seeking attitudes, intentions and behaviour

Contact: A/Prof Alison Calear
Mental health of students

The Uni Virtual Clinic (UVC): A comprehensive online mental health service to prevent and treat mental health problems and related issues in university students

- Anonymous, tailored, and free to the end-user, incorporating evidence-based treatments/information, and developed using co-design methods.
- Information about help-seeking, mental health problems, and other key student-related issues, screening, and self-help tools
- Pilot trial: Developed for the ANU and is currently being trialled with ANU students ($N = 200$)
- Potential for UVC dissemination across Australian universities is strong

Contact: A/Prof Alison Calear
Mental health of students
Lived experience research

• **ACACIA**: The ACT Consumer and Carer Mental Health Research Unit
  – Research priority-setting from consumer and carer perspectives
  – Active involvement in research processes through Advisory Group, internship and consultation
  – Projects include trial of a peer worker in ACT-Wide Mental Health Services, and evaluation of ACT Partners in Recovery

Contact: Dr Michelle Banfield
Lived experience research

• **Finding the Path**: study investigating care access and navigation for serious mental illness
  – Access to general practice
  – Care received in general practice
  – Care planning experiences
Suicide prevention

- New tools to assess suicide risk/recovery
- Testing theoretical models of suicide
- LifeSpan: evaluating systems-based approach to suicide prevention
- School-based suicide prevention projects (above)
- Barriers to help seeking for suicide, including stigma, mental health literacy, self-reliance

Contact: Dr. Annette Erlangsen
Rural mental health

- **Sustainable Farms**
  - Collaboration between Fenner School of Environment, CMHR and Business/Economics (2017-2027)
  - Examine links between sustainable farming practices on ecological, mental health and financial outcomes
  - Philanthropic funding (including Ian Potter Foundation, Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation)

- **Mental health services in rural areas**
  - Geospatial mapping, atlas of health services, e-health

Contact: Dr. Bregje van Spijker
Learning and Development

• Career Expert PhD Pathway
  – A new pathway for structured support for experienced professionals and public officers to convert workplace expertise into tertiary qualifications
  – Mutually beneficial to academia and organisations

• Seminar Series
  – Presented in partnership with the Australian Health and Hospital Association, national and international speaker series

• Masters-level course: population mental health

• PhD, Masters, Honours student supervision

Contact: Dr. Sebastian Rosenberg
Key collaborations (1)

- **Mental health sector**
  - NATIONAL: Capital PHN, ACT Health, Department of Health, beyondblue, headspace, emerging ACT Office for Mental Health, WA Primary Health Alliance, Menslink, Mental Health Community Coalition, ACT Mental Health Consumer Network, Carers ACT
  - INTERNATIONAL: Departments of Health in Spain (Catalonia, Basque Country), Denmark, Italy (Friule-Veneto)

- **Professional organisations**
  - Mental Health Australia, Society for Mental Health Research, Suicide Prevention Australia, Australian Psychological Society
Key collaborations (2)

• Research networks
  – **AUSTRALIA**: Black Dog Institute (UNSW), National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre (UNSW), Menzies Centre for Health Policy (University of Sydney), University of Queensland, University of Melbourne
  – **US**: Harvard Medical School, University of Rochester, Johns Hopkins University
  – **CANADA**: Toronto University
  – **EUROPE**: London School of Economics, University College of London, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (ImpleMentAll), INSERM (Paris, France), PECUNIA Consortium Europe