



## DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023

# Welcome

Dear Colleagues

It is an honour to greet you in this newsletter as the Professor of General Practice at Western Sydney University. I would like to start by acknowledging Prof Jenny Reath for her dynamism, commitment, and leadership at WSU from the inception of the Department of General Practice. She is now an Emeritus Professor with us- a well-deserved recognition of her work and it is great to know she will remain connected with us into the future. I certainly have big shoes to fill.

Like all of us in the Department, I am strongly committed to training the next generation of doctors to understand and appreciate general practice and primary care. A further goal we share is to attract more medical students to a career in general practice. The skilled teaching students receive in their GP placements from our brilliant GP Supervisors is key to this. The feedback we receive from students after their GP placements lets us know that they appreciate the teaching they receive, and they report their GP supervisors to be good role models. We currently have GP placements for students in Year 1, 3 and 5 which requires a lot of teaching! However, we believe it is vital that general practice is a visible and central aspect of the training



of medical students. Our GP Supervisors have our heartfelt thanks for all that you do.

I hope you will find this newsletter interesting – we have some introductions and farewells, as well as some opportunities for you to engage with us even more!

Warm Regards  
Penny

**Professor Penny Abbott**  
**Peter Brennan Chair of General Practice**

## Higher Degree Research Opportunities

We welcome enquiries from medical graduates and other healthcare professionals interested to do PhD or Masters.

The Department of general practice staff has expertise in General Practice, Primary Care, Justice Health, Ear and Hearing Health, Health Service Delivery, Interprofessional Care, Health Care Communication, Cultural Diversity and Competence, Chronic Disease Management, Indigenous Health, Women's Health, Adolescent Health, Mental Health, Refugee Health.

Please contact Dr Phyllis Lau [Phyllis.lau@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:Phyllis.lau@westernsydney.edu.au) for more information.

## GP Conjoints

Thank you to all our GP Conjoints. We greatly value your commitment and contribution to our teaching and research activities here at Western Sydney University.

If your name is not on this list your conjoint status may have expired.

Please contact Vicki Bradley  
[v.bradley@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:v.bradley@westernsydney.edu.au)  
and she will assist you!

Dr Ali Alsamil, Dr Alison Lyon,  
Dr Amadeus Klocker, Dr Angela Kwok,  
Dr Anita Jenkins, Dr Aziz Zaman,  
Dr Brian Wallace, Dr Cecilia Le,  
Dr Christine Ahern, Dr Christine Metusela,  
Dr David Le, Dr Coralie Wales, Dr Deepa Mahananda, Prof Diana O'Halloran,  
Dr Gardiyaswam Lindamulage Chaminda, Dr Helen Chriss, Dr Hanai Bittar, Dr Ifat Anjum, Dr Ivan Parise,  
Dr Leigh Haysom, Dr Jason Cheng,  
Dr Jenny James, Dr Joe Languido  
Dr John Houston, Dr Jurriaan Beek,  
Dr Kenneth McCroary, Dr Kun Yun Kelvin Hon, Dr Lawrence Tan, Dr Leigh Haysom,  
Ms Letitia Campbell, Dr Lilliane Carchedi,  
Dr Magdy Girgis, Dr Marietta Languido,  
Dr Mary Girgis, Assoc Prof Matthew Gray, Dr Md Zahidul Haque, Dr Michael Phipps, Dr Michael Tran, Dr Mohammed Hasan, Dr Mohammad Shinwari,  
Dr Nalayini Sugirthan, Dr Natalie Cochrane, Dr Natalie Lindsay, Dr Nigel Grebert, Dr Nirmala Christanthan,  
Dr Olataga Alofiva-Doorbinna, Dr Oisin Byrne, Dr Pat Romeo, Dr Pravind Kumar,  
Dr Qing Wan, Dr Raymond Seeto,  
Dr Rosanne Hamilton, Dr Rosemary Isaacs, Dr Salman Zafar, Dr Sandra Morrell, Dr Shalinie Seneraththige Dona,  
Dr Steve Trankle, Dr Sumathy Mahen,  
Dr Tania Hasib, Dr Tasnuba Perverz,  
Dr Thava Seelan, Dr Tim Senior, Dr Tuan Quang Bu, Varun Nanda, Dr Yvonne An

# Update from the Department of General Practice

## WELCOME



Phyllis Lau

### PHYLLIS LAU

Phyllis is Senior Lecturer and Research Lead at the Department of General Practice, Western Sydney University. Her areas of research interest include Indigenous health, chronic disease management, interprofessional collaborative care and healthcare communication, and health service delivery for the purpose of informing primary health care policy reform, particularly related to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and disadvantaged population groups.

She has been awarded several research grants over the years including National health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) project grants and fellowship grants and Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) awards. She is or has been a Chief Investigator in 15 funded projects (including 2 NHMRC project grants) and the primary investigator in 9. She has also been a Chief investigator in 5 government agency-tendered or commissioned projects, and a Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) funded project.

Phyllis' expertise is in mixed-methods research. She has experience in various study designs including randomised controlled trials, descriptive quantitative studies, qualitative studies (predominantly phenomenological design), interviews, focus groups, quantitative/qualitative/mixed-methods surveys including Delphi consensus surveys for management pathway development and case studies.

Phyllis has joint appointments at the University of Melbourne – Honorary



Christabel Hoe

Associate Professor at the Melbourne Dental School and Senior Lecturer at the Department of General Practice. Phyllis is also research adviser for Hong Kong Tuen Mun Hospital Family Medicine Department, and a visiting academic at the University of Malaya. She holds active national advocacy and leadership roles. She is the President of the Australasian Association for Academic Primary Care (AAAPC) that advocates for high quality primary care research, education and practice. She is also a founding member of the Pharmacy Oral Health Alliance that advocates on a politically challenging platform for accessible oral health care through non-dental health professionals.

### CHRISTABEL HOE

#### What is an Academic Registrar?

I am Christabel Hoe, and I am the Western Sydney University Academic Registrar for 2023. I am extremely grateful to be provided with this opportunity through RACGP to undertake a different path in my general practice training in such a supportive team environment. I am working with the department looking at parental attitudes towards topical corticosteroid use in eczema management.

The academic registrar post is a great way to gain experience in both research undertakings and teaching. The research component allows you to gain a glimpse behind clinical guidelines and advice, in a way that cannot be attained purely through clinical practice. This additional dimension will provide you with the chance to learn in a completely different way. This may be in the form of putting together an ethics proposal

or presenting your findings at a conference for the very first time!

In addition to research, you are exposed to an abundance of invaluable teaching opportunities. Being able to lead large group tutorials is an exciting experience you don't often get as a registrar. It is not uncommon to be inspired by the ideas that are bounced off in these associated discussions.

Overall, the academic post is an exciting way to learn about a different side of primary care in the best way possible, and I would encourage future GP registrars to apply!

## FAREWELLS

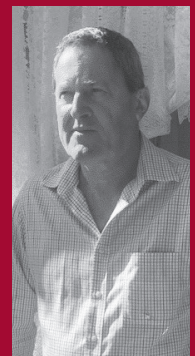
### DR SHALINIE FERNANDO



It has been wonderful having Dr Shalinie Fernando with our department over the past 12 months as she completed the overseas training component of her MD. We thank Drs Thava and Shanthini Seelan for hosting her clinical observership throughout the year. We wish her all the best as she returns to Sri Lanka to continue her work as a family physician with the Ministry of Health.

### DR STEVE TRANKLE

We congratulate Dr Steve Trankle on his retirement and thank him for his wonderful work with our department over the last 10 years as our senior Research Officer. He has made a great contribution, including leadership of health service evaluations which have the goal to improve the quality of care for the people of Greater Western Sydney. He is missed!



## RURAL CLINICAL SCHOOL UPDATES

We are fortunate to welcome the fresh faced 2023 /2024 Western Sydney University medical students to the University Centre Rural Health and the beautiful northern rivers region for their rural year.

The students commenced placements in their hospital terms and general practices throughout Lennox Head, Mullumbimby, Ballina, Bay and Lismore in July.

We look forward to an enjoyable year with a lovely, enthusiastic group of students.

**Left to right back row:** Grace, Patrick, Joel, Sean, Michael, Chris, Elly, Isabella, Mitch, Cameron, Jasmin **Left to right front row:** Krishna, Niranjanan, Ling, Beata, Mikaela, Emma and Lucy



## Update from our Senior Lecturers

2023 has been another busy year for teaching in the department.

We started with the year 5 conference week, where the Department of General Practice took the lead in providing a comprehensive program for our final-year students in January. We also had significant involvement in the year 4 conference week in June, running 4 separate workshops in one day including suturing, ENT, MSK, and safe opioid prescribing. We have been supported by several of our excellent affiliate GP and non-GP specialist colleagues who graciously took time out of their busy schedules to assist with the workshops.

It is not just conference weeks that the department has been involved in; our team of senior lecturers are responsible for GP teaching to the students in various stages of their MD program. Dr. Miriam Brooks continues to oversee the Year 5 GP placements, supporting students and providing additional back-to-base sessions

on Fridays. Dr. Winston Lo oversees year 3 students' GP teaching, coordinating with the Medicines in Contexts team during student placements. Dr. Yasin Shahab is responsible for the Year 1 and 2 students, organising Year 1 & 2 GP workshops and ensuring students get early exposure to the world of general practice. Overwhelmingly, we have received positive student feedback about our teaching sessions, which is a delight to the team.

We are very grateful for the valuable assistance and innovative contributions to our teaching program from our academic registrar Dr. Christabel Hoe. She has been a wonderful addition, with our students enjoying learning from her as a 'near-peer'.

Teaching also happens beyond the walls of the university campus. We want to acknowledge our amazing GP supervisors for their efforts in providing enriching placements for our students. Our GP 'supers' have shown commitment to our students, with students reflecting positively on their experience of

high-quality teaching. We appreciate their continued desire to take students in their practices and to provide a valued learning experience for them.

As with all of the other department tasks, it would not have been possible without the hard-working administrative staff we have in the department. They undertake the challenging tasks of finding suitable placements and gathering all the assessment paperwork from our students, as well as organising all the rooms and facilities that we need as academics. A big thanks to Mrs. Vicki Bradley, Mrs. Sharon Lawrence, Mr. George Sotirios and Mrs. Nicole King who ensure that our teaching programs keep running smoothly.

If there are any GPs who would be interested in becoming a GP supervisor for our medical students and have an interest in teaching, please contact Dr. Yasin Shahab at [y.shahab@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:y.shahab@westernsydney.edu.au).

## Teachers

### WHAT DO MEDICAL STUDENTS CONSIDER TO BE THE ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD GP SUPERVISOR? DO YOU POSSESS THE ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD GP SUPERVISOR?

All GP Supervisors affiliated with WSU who practice in metropolitan Sydney, Bathurst and the Northern Rivers are welcome to join our GP Supervisor Masterclass on 'Attributes of a good supervisor' on Tuesday 24th October at 7:00 - 8:30pm.

The WSU GP Academic team will present and facilitate small group discussion on the attributes of a good supervisor, followed by discussion of the expectations for WSU GP placements across the 5 year MD program.

This masterclass will be relevant to both experienced and new GP supervisors. CPD points will be available to be claimed from both RACGP and ACRRM.

**Formal invitations to register for this masterclass will be sent out shortly.**

# Research Updates

## WATCH INFLATE

As we start the close out phase of the trials we are reflecting on the amazing work and support from our Aboriginal Medical Services. They have worked with us for many years on this research with the goal of improving the management of otitis media in children so they can learn and develop well.

We had our final WATCH INFLATE meeting in Sydney November 2022. It was a successful meeting and a nice opportunity to say goodbye in person to our current research sites.

We are now preparing to analyse our results. We sadly farewell Robyn Walsh the Clinical Trial Coordinator for the trials. Robyn has been the heart of WATCH INFLATE and we can't thank for enough for her amazing support over the last 10 years.



Watch Inflate Team

## Department of General Practice Student Awards

This year we will be presenting three Year 5 awards for exemplary medical students. We thank the generous supervisors and donors who have made these awards possible.

### DR JAYADEV AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN GENERAL PRACTICE MD RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Dr Channappa Jayadev has made another generous donation to establish an award for students who demonstrate excellence. These kinds of awards are so valuable to encourage and recognise students who strive for excellence during their studies.

### PICTON FAMILY MEDICAL CENTRE & WOLLONDILLY COUNCIL PRIZE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN GENERAL PRACTICE - AWARDED FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN GENERAL PRACTICE

Dr Anna Pham and the Wollondilly Council have been providing an award for some years to acknowledge Year 5 students who show exceptional merit in general practice. We have been able to recognise

outstanding students for some years now – thank you Dr Pham and team!

### DR NICK COLLINS MEMORIAL AWARD

Thanks to all those who have donated to this award in memory of our dear colleague and friend Dr Nick Collins. Nick was passionate about the role of primary health care in supporting the health and wellbeing of communities in Greater Western Sydney. He was also a popular teacher committed to showing students the satisfaction and importance of a career as a general practitioner. It will be awarded to a student who has demonstrated commitment, understanding and contribution to primary care and general practice. Please consider donating to the Nick Collins Award so that we can continue to offer this award to deserving students into the future. To donate please follow this [link](#) to Dr Nick Collins Memorial Fund.

**If any other colleagues are interested in contributing to a MPhil or PhD scholarship for an aspiring GP researcher, or research bursaries for medical students interested in primary care research, we would love to be able to offer support in this way – please contact Professor Penny Abbott or Dr Phyllis Lau to discuss!**



Please pass this newsletter onto GP alumni you know and ask them please to drop Penny a quick email at [p.abbott@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:p.abbott@westernsydney.edu.au) so we can add them to our contact list!

# New Publications

1. Ng KM, Chu TK, Lau P. Experience of COVID-19 vaccination uptake among primary healthcare workers in Hong Kong: A qualitative study. (2022). *Vaccines*,10(9),1531; <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines10091531>
2. Priede A, Lau P, Darby I, Morgan M, Mariño R. Referral Compliance Following a Diabetes Screening in a Dental Setting: A Scoping Review. (2022) *Healthcare* <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare10102020>
3. Reath J, Lau P, Lo W, Trankle S, Brooks M, Shahab Y, Abbott P. Strengthening learning and research in health equity – opportunities for university departments of primary health care and general practice. (2022). *Australian Journal of Primary Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1071/PY22146>
4. Ng NM, Ng YS, Chu TK, Lau P. Factors affecting prescription of sodium glucose co-transporter 2 inhibitors ion patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus with established cardiovascular disease/chronic kidney disease: a qualitative study. *BMC Primary Care*. 2022;23:317. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12875-022-01928-z>
5. Milton S, Macrae F, McIntosh J, Saya S, Alphonse P, Yogaparan T, Karnchanachari N, Novy K, Nguyen P, Lau P, Forbes C, Cummings KL, Emery J. Designing a decision aid for cancer prevention: a qualitative study. *Family Practice*, cmad042; published 14 April 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fampra/cmad042>
6. Quinlan-Turner P, Lau P, McVilly K. Late effects of polio: Interviewing general practitioners and health professionals about the need for and the means of promoting continuing professional development. *Australian Journal for General Practitioners*. 2023;52:317-23.
7. Abbott P, Frede C, Hu W, Lujic S, Trankle S, Campbell L, Gunasekera H, Walsh R, Leach A, Morris P, Kong, K, Reath J. Acute otitis media symptoms and symptom scales in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. (2023). *PLOS ONE*.
8. Tan T, Chan S, Ind M, Pace G, Bailey J, Reed K, Dutton T, Osuagwu UL, Wong KC. Benefits and challenges of electronic prescribing for general practitioners and pharmacists in regional Australia. *Aust J Rural Health*. 2023 May 27. doi: 10.1111/ajr.12999.

## CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL PRACTICE  
ACADEMIC & RESEARCH STAFF

### Professor Penny Abbott

Head of Department of General Practice  
(02) 4620 3560 | 0414 645 062  
[p.abbott@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:p.abbott@westernsydney.edu.au)

### Dr Miriam Brooks

Senior Lecturer (Tue/Fri)  
(02) 4620 3896  
[miriam.brooks@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:miriam.brooks@westernsydney.edu.au)

### Dr Yasin Shahab

Senior Lecturer (Tue & Wed)  
(02) 4620 3896  
[Y.Shahab@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:Y.Shahab@westernsydney.edu.au)

### Dr Winston Lo

Senior Lecturer (Mon/Fri)  
(02) 4620 3561 | 0403 163 868  
[w.lo@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:w.lo@westernsydney.edu.au)

### Dr Phyllis Lau

Senior Lecturer  
0400 778 812  
[phyllis.lau@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:phyllis.lau@westernsydney.edu.au)

### Dr Christabel Hoe

GP Registrar  
[c.hoe@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:c.hoe@westernsydney.edu.au)

### PROFESSIONAL STAFF

#### Ms Vicki Bradley

Administrative Officer (Mon-Thurs)  
(02) 4620 3896 | 0412 189 965  
[v.bradley@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:v.bradley@westernsydney.edu.au)

#### Mrs Sharon Lawrence

Administrative Officer (Tues-Fri)  
(02) 4620 3933 | 0450 778 075  
[s.lawrence@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:s.lawrence@westernsydney.edu.au)

#### Ms Nicole King (WATCH Trial)

Administrative Officer (Mon-Wed)  
(02) 4620 3562  
[n.king@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:n.king@westernsydney.edu.au)

### Contact information

1300 897 669  
[study@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:study@westernsydney.edu.au)

Western Sydney University  
Locked Bag 1797 Penrith  
NSW 2751 Australia

