



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health and Aged Care

MEDIA RELEASE

20 June 2021

\$74 million investment in Australian-led clinical trials

A study involving 15,000 Australians which aims to develop a next-generation, standardised diagnosis for melanoma is one of 30 clinical trials and cohort studies to be funded through the Morrison Government's \$74 million investment to find better ways to prevent, detect and treat disease.

The \$3.2 million melanoma cohort study, led by Associate Professor Victoria Mar from Monash University and Alfred Health, will be the first in the world to document on such a large scale the whole skin surface of participants with histopathology images and other patient details.

The Morrison Government's investment will support 20 clinical trials and 10 cohort studies for up to five years and will fill important gaps in knowledge about the causes of disease and test the effectiveness of new approaches to disease prevention, detection and treatment.

Minister for Health and Aged Care Greg Hunt said the trial would help to discover more effective diagnosis options thousands of Australians who are tested for skin cancer each year.

"Skin cancer costs the Australian healthcare system more than \$1 billion annually. Australia has the highest rate of melanoma, the deadliest form, for which there is currently no standardised diagnosis," Minister Hunt said.

"This study will use cutting-edge, total-body 3D imaging machines across metropolitan and regional Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, with the research team working to develop next-generation diagnostic and prognostic algorithms for early detection of melanoma and skin cancer."

"Clinical trials and cohort studies are crucial sources of evidence for the improvement of health and healthcare. Each of these projects has the potential to improve health outcomes here in Australia and across the globe."

Awarded by the National Health and Medical Research Council and commencing in 2021, the funded projects will investigate a range of health issues.

This includes:

- A trial led by University of Melbourne/Orygen's Associate Professor Simon Rice will determine the effectiveness of the online social media-based intervention Affinity to reduce suicidal thoughts and behaviours in young people seeking care for major depressive disorder.

Authorised by Greg Hunt MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Somerville, Victoria.

- A clinical trial in Papua New Guinea led by Dr Holger Unger of the Menzies School of Health Research to assess the advantages of combining the anti-malarial treatments sulphadoxine-pyrimethamine and dihydroartemisinin-piperaquine to clear malaria among pregnant women while reducing the adverse outcomes such as miscarriage and stillbirth (fetal loss), low birth weight, and neonatal death.
- A clinical trial led by Associate Professor Leanne Sakzewski from the University of Queensland will include 150 children with cerebral palsy (CP) to compare a new intervention, ACTIVE STRIDES -CP, with usual care.

By testing new healthcare interventions in volunteers under controlled conditions, clinical trials underpin decisions on whether to use a new diagnostic, drug, vaccine or procedure. Cohort studies uncover risk factors and causes of disease by following groups of people over time, sometimes many years.

A full list of grant recipients is below and available on NHMRC's website:
www.nhmrc.gov.au.

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Chief Investigator A	Application Title	Administering Institution	Budget \$
Associate Professor Simon Rice	Pragmatic trial of a targeted digital intervention for youth with suicidal thoughts and behaviours attending outpatient care	University of Melbourne	\$1,443,572
Associate Professor Rebecca McKetin	A Phase III randomised placebo-controlled trial of mirtazapine as a pharmacotherapy for methamphetamine ("Ice") dependence	University of New South Wales	\$3,923,009
Professor Richard Kanaan	Breathing Control as a treatment for Non-Epileptic Seizures	University of Melbourne	\$1,740,187
Professor Shyamali Dharmage	Providing translatable evidence to advance prevention and management of COPD: a longitudinal study from the 1st to 7th decade of life	University of Melbourne	\$2,893,320
Professor Jonathan Shaw	PRogrESSION of DIabetic ComplicaTions - PREDICT	Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute	\$4,784,627
Professor Trevor Leong	AGITG TOP GEAR: A randomised phase II/III trial of preoperative chemoradiotherapy versus preoperative chemotherapy for resectable gastric cancer	University of Sydney	\$621,644
Dr Holger Unger	Intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancy with sulphadoxine-pyrimethamine plus dihydroartemisinin-piperaquine to reduce adverse pregnancy outcomes and prevent malaria in Papua New Guinea: a randomised controlled trial	Menzies School of Health Research	\$2,938,453
Professor Stephanie Brown	Uncovering the hidden impacts and costs of exposure to intimate partner violence in childhood: a 20-year cohort study	Murdoch Children's Research Institute	\$1,595,473
Dr Christina Abdel Shaheed	IMPLORE - Implementing an opioid stewardship intervention to reduce opioid use	University of Sydney	\$2,352,236

Chief Investigator A	Application Title	Administering Institution	Budget \$
Professor Carol Hodgson	Low OxyGen Intervention for Cardiac Arrest injury Limitation trial (LOGICAL)	Monash University	\$2,314,403
Associate Professor Camille Raynes-Greenow	Reducing household air pollution exposure to improve early child health and development; extending the intervention and follow-up of "Poriborton: the CHANge trial".	University of Sydney	\$2,916,421
Associate Professor Kirsten Morley	A randomised controlled trial of N-acetylcysteine for the treatment of alcohol use disorder	University of Sydney	\$1,294,923
Professor Jane Pillow	Cognitive Improvement through early Restoration of circadian rhythms in very preterm Infants via Environmental Modification: The CIRCA DIEM Study	University of Western Australia	\$3,077,039
Associate Professor Victoria Mar	Reconceiving early detection of melanoma	Monash University	\$3,217,920
Professor Ian Hickie	A large-scale clinical effectiveness (health services) trial to determine whether personalised health care packages, combined with digitally-supported measurement-based care, improve functional outcomes in young people with mood disorders	University of Sydney	\$3,434,588
Professor Y C Gary Lee	Australasian Malignant Pleural Effusion (AMPLE)-3 trial	University of Western Australia	\$1,105,749
Professor Peter Morris	'Azithromycin before Birth' - Single dose azithromycin shortly before birth to reduce infection in Aboriginal mothers and babies: a randomised controlled trial.	Menzies School of Health Research	\$3,205,109
Dr Bei Bei	A Scalable Insomnia Program during the Pregnancy and Postpartum Periods: An Effectiveness-Implementation Hybrid Trial	Monash University	\$877,335
Professor Susan Ramus	Prospective Ovarian Cancer Cohort to Authenticate Stratification of Prognosis in Ovarian Tumours (POCCA-SPOT)	University of New South Wales	\$993,580
Professor Andrew Wei	INTERCEPT (Investigating Novel Therapy to target Early Relapse and Clonal Evolution as Pre-emptive Therapy in AML): a multi-arm, precision-based, recursive, platform trial	Monash University	\$5,789,515
Professor Georgina Long	Anti-PD 1 Brain Collaboration + Radiotherapy Extension: The ABC-X Study	Melanoma Institute Australia	\$1,010,142
Professor Erica Wood	Preventing infections in patients with blood cancer through evidence-based use of immunoglobulin or alternatives: The RATIONALISE trial	Monash University	\$2,490,422
Associate Professor Valerie Sung	Whole-of-population CRISPR point-of-care testing for congenital cytomegalovirus to prevent hearing and neurodevelopment disabilities through a public health approach	Murdoch Children's Research Institute	\$2,058,921
Associate Professor Kenneth Pang	Trans20: A longitudinal cohort study to improve outcomes for transgender children and adolescents	Murdoch Children's Research Institute	\$1,566,662

Chief Investigator A	Application Title	Administering Institution	Budget \$
Associate Professor Joanne Ryan	Clinical trial to determine the effects of statins on cognition: STAREE-Mind	Monash University	\$2,795,200
Dr Rachel Peters	Food allergy in the first 15 years of life: wave 5 of the HealthNuts longitudinal study	Murdoch Children's Research Institute	\$2,435,075
Professor Rachel Neale	The effect of high SPF sunscreen application on vitamin D	The Council of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research	\$1,175,124
Associate Professor Leanne Sakzewski	ACTIVE STRIDES-CP: Randomised trial of Intensive Rehabilitation (Combined Intensive Gait and Cycling Training) for children with moderate to severe bilateral cerebral palsy	The University of Queensland	\$2,401,294
Professor Alex Brown	Predicting Renal, Ophthalmic and Heart Events in the Aboriginal Community: The PROPHECY Diabetes Multi-Omics Cohort Study	The University of Adelaide	\$3,955,505
Professor Bruce Neal	A randomised trial of the effects of SGLT2 inhibition versus metformin on decline in renal function when used as first line therapy in type 2 diabetes	University of New South Wales	\$3,815,693
Total			74,223,141