



# STRENGTHENING BOYS' AND YOUNG MEN'S HEALTH

## The Freemasons Centre for Male Health and Wellbeing

### Research Project Opportunities

The Freemasons Centre for Male Health and Wellbeing (FCMHW) reflects a research alliance between Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies), University of Adelaide, the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI), Flinders University and the Masonic Charities Trust. It has involved the establishment of two Divisions – one in South Australia, the other in the Northern Territory. The NT Division will be led by Menzies.

The intention of the FCMHW is to foster and support internationally recognised transdisciplinary research focused on improving the health and wellbeing of boys and men, including that of their families and communities.

The following thematic research areas will be the primary focus of the FCMHW-NT over the next three years:

- Indigenous male health
- Boys and young men's health
- Equity and Social Determinants of Health (including a focus on employment, education, and justice; and vulnerable and marginalised communities)
- Fathers and families
- Social and Emotional Wellbeing (including alcohol and other drugs, gambling, and mental health)



# Confident and Healthy Aboriginal Males Program (CHAMP): The development and piloting of a strengths-based health promotion program for young Aboriginal males in the Northern Territory

WELLBEING AND PREVENTABLE CHRONIC DISEASES

MASTER BY RESEARCH

PhD

This project aims to develop a culturally-responsive and gender-sensitive outreach health promotion program to engage young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males aged 16-25 (respectfully summarised to Aboriginal). It will draw upon the findings of a recently completed Lowitja Institute funded research project focused on understanding health literacy among young Aboriginal males in the Northern Territory as the basis for program design (Smith et al 2019). This project will involve the co-development of a series of interactive health promotion modules pertinent to the lives of young Aboriginal males living in regional and remote Australia. Aboriginal Elders and respected male community mentors will guide all aspects of program design and delivery. The flexible program design will include modules that can be delivered as standalone sessions or as a more comprehensive program delivered over an extended period. The modules will be interactive and involve a combination of face-to-face and online engagement consistent with emerging global men's health promotion evidence from Australia, Canada and the United States. Based on the Lowitja project findings, module topics will include: 'staying strong'; doing things 'right way'; valuing cultural identity; valuing positive personal/family relationships; engaging role models and social support; seeking-help and accessing health services; reducing violence and preventing injuries to self and others; minimising the harms of alcohol and other drugs; engaging in safe sex and respectful relationships; and being a good father/parent. The development of the program will be iterative and involve a partnership between Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies), Darwin Indigenous Men's Service (NT), and the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet. The program will be piloted in a community-based setting in Darwin, with evaluation findings used to refine the program design.

## **Prof James Smith**

[james.smith@menzies.edu.au](mailto:james.smith@menzies.edu.au)

# Supporting mental health and social wellbeing among men from migrant and refugee backgrounds resettling in the Northern Territory

**WELLBEING AND PREVENTABLE CHRONIC DISEASES****MASTER BY RESEARCH****PhD**

Research exploring migrant and refugee men's mental health in Australia is scarce. However, preliminary research indicates that the social determinants of physical and mental illness among migrant and refugee men is higher than Australian-born men. Other research tells us that men are less likely than women to seek help when they are experiencing mental health issues. Migrants in Australia and globally are more likely to experience barriers to accessing healthcare, employment and social services, which may adversely affect mental health and wellbeing, particularly among recent migrants as they navigate new expectations and cultural norms. Barriers in accessing services are often attached to people's migrant and citizenship statuses, which determine their legal rights associated with work, education, healthcare and social security benefits. Additionally, migrants and refugees, particularly from non-English speaking countries, can also experience linguistic and/or cultural barriers when resettling in Australia.

This project aims to expand and deepen understandings about the complex mental health and wellbeing challenges that men from migrant and refugee backgrounds resettling in the Northern Territory experience. It will explore what services and supports are available to refugee and migrant men in the Northern Territory to meet their mental health and wellbeing needs and identify strategies and programs that are effective in this space. Partnering with mainstream and targeted mental health services working with migrants, the project proposes a participatory action research (PAR) approach with organisations to develop and adapt models of support to meet the needs of different cohorts of this population (young/old; urban/remote; different ethnicities, education levels, and English competencies).

There will be flexibility for the student to develop and adapt their research methods, likely through a combination of focus groups that follows an iterative approach to data collection and analysis, in collaboration with the partnering organisations. The supervisory team has connections to service providers and organisations working with migrant and refugee populations in the Darwin region. It is expected that the student will leverage these established relationships, however there is also space to develop new connections.

## **Prof James Smith**

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# Developing a culturally-responsive online social and emotional wellbeing education and support program for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males

WELLBEING AND PREVENTABLE CHRONIC DISEASES

MASTER BY RESEARCH

PhD

Age-appropriate, gender-sensitive, and culturally-responsive programs are essential for promoting the social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) and mental health of vulnerable populations. Such programs have potential to reduce the health and social inequities these populations face. In Australia, very few digital health promotion programs are tailored towards the unique needs of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males, despite their disproportionate experience of SEWB concerns. This project involves the adaptation and trial delivery of an evidence-based online intervention known as the Young Black Men, Masculinities, and Mental Health (YBMen) project. YBMen is a mental health and social support program facilitated through a private social media group (e.g. Facebook/Instagram) originally developed for young Black college men in the US. It pays specific attention to intersections between age, gender and culture. Our intervention involves the adaptation and contextualisation of the US program to meet the SEWB needs of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males in WA and the NT that are currently attending high school or university, with potential for scaling to include other state/territory jurisdictions over the longer term.

**Prof James Smith**

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## Social media and risky alcohol use among young male Australian university students

**WELLBEING AND PREVENTABLE CHRONIC DISEASES****MASTER BY RESEARCH****PhD**

Despite population declines in alcohol use, young people still drink at levels that put them at risk of alcohol-related harm, with males drinking more than females. There is genuine cause for concern regarding alcohol and youth as the age at which most people transition from high school to university coincides with the age of those most likely to drink at risky levels and thus are more vulnerable to alcohol-related harm. Gender norms shape the drinking behaviours of Australian youth, with young males having higher rates of risky health practices (e.g., harmful use of alcohol) and also a reluctance to engage in preventive health behaviours.

The alcohol industry utilises social media (SM) for alcohol promotion, with youth being the target audience. There exists a relationship between exposure to SM alcohol-related content and drinking, especially among young males. Most of the related international and scant Australian work has been limited by being only observational and with cross-sectional data. Thus, this study would be the first to explore baseline prevalence and predictors of engagement with SM alcohol marketing and its relationship with alcohol use, and the emergence of these relationships over time (i.e., over the first year of university), among the target group.

The overall aim of this mixed-methods (an online survey and co-design workshops) project is to generate new knowledge about how the relationship between exposure to and engagement with SM alcohol marketing, and alcohol use compounds over time, in an effort to minimise harm from alcohol use among young male university students in Australia.

### **Dr Himanshu Gupta**

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# Sportsmanship in young Australian male athletes: the role of competitiveness, motivational orientation, and perceived purposes of sport

WELLBEING AND PREVENTABLE CHRONIC DISEASES

MASTER BY RESEARCH

PhD

Competition and sportsmanship are inextricably linked. Sports psychologists distinguish between two “orientations” that people have toward competition: task orientation (intrinsic participation goals) and ego orientation (extrinsic participation goals). Competitors with strong task orientation focus on setting personal performance goals that are part of larger goals. To individuals with strong ego orientations, winning is achieved by all means and at all costs, even if it means cheating or hurting their opponents. Both constructs exist simultaneously in individuals; however, the relative degree of each construct varies.

When ego orientation is dominant, sportsmanship takes the back seat. Unfortunately, today’s sport culture, especially the model of professional sports, enhances this view of competition and thereby undermines the development of sportsmanship in young athletes. Instead, attempts to cheat, taunting, and head butting have become normalised in some sports. When youth sport participants are constantly exposed to such models, they subsequently show little sportsmanship and respect for their opponents. Anecdotal evidence suggests that sportsmanship and friendly rivalries are easier for girls than boys - winning matters to girls, but they are not consumed by it in the same way boys can be.

There is a growing concern over the apparent increase in incidents of abuse and harassment by sports players in Australia. The limited research into the factors that influence sportsmanship, especially among younger male athletes, is extremely dated and is now lacking in Australia. This pilot study aims to extend the theoretical foundation of sportsmanship research by examining measures of competitiveness, motivational orientation, and perceived purposes of sport participation as predictors of sportsmanship in a sample of young male participants in sports, with a view to scale it as a future longitudinal study.

**Prof James Smith**

james.smith@menzies.edu.au

# Investigating the influence of marketing on sports betting among young men living in Australia

WELLBEING AND PREVENTABLE CHRONIC DISEASES

MASTER BY RESEARCH

PhD

There has been a significant increase in the amount of marketing for sports betting products in Australia, including significant increases in advertising spend by online bookmakers. Marketing strategies for sports betting extend beyond traditional marketing platforms and include more contemporary forms such as social media platforms and commercial sports sponsorship.

Young men appear to be the target market for sports betting companies, with a range of marketing and promotional strategies used to both appeal to and reach this audience. Limited research indicates that gambling advertising increases the likelihood of gambling, may increase already high levels of gambling, and is likely to make it more difficult for problem gamblers to gamble less or not gamble at all.

Sport betting advertisers seek to build and develop upon existing cultural symbols, behaviours, and contexts, with an aim of embedding their product within these behaviours and creating new sub-cultures and identities associated with that product. Gambling industry through its marketing, associates sports betting with the culturally-valued aspects of being a sports fan - including masculinity, mateship, support for your team, fan loyalty, thrill, winning, and power. These marketing tactics, which are so closely aligned with such a valued cultural activity in sports, may have an influential impact on individual and peer group identities associated with gambling on sports.

There exists limited Australian research that has explored how marketing strategies influence gambling attitudes and consumption intentions, and the range of strategies that are used to reduce the risks posed by marketing to different population sub-groups. The overall aim of this qualitative study is to understand how marketing impacts gambling behaviours of young Australian male sports bettors in order to develop strategies that will minimise systemic gambling into the future.

**Dr Himanshu Gupta**

Himanshu.Gupta@menzies.edu.au



# How can Australian Football League clubs help men aged 35-65 improve their health by losing weight, becoming more active, and maintaining these changes long-term? A feasibility and pilot randomised controlled trial

WELLBEING AND PREVENTABLE CHRONIC DISEASES

MASTER BY RESEARCH

PhD

Overweight and obesity are highly prevalent among Australian men. Professional sports settings can be instrumental in engaging men in weight loss programmes; the Football Fans in Training programme delivered in professional UK football clubs was successful and cost-effective in helping men lose weight and maintain in the long-term.

The Australian Football League (AFL) is a potentially attractive setting to engage men in a weight loss programme. The aim of this project (Aussie-Football Fans In Training (Aussie-FFIT)) is to develop, pilot, and evaluate the feasibility of a weight loss intervention for overweight/obese middle-aged men, delivered in AFL settings in the Northern Territory of Australia, to promote weight loss and healthier lifestyles and determine its suitability for a future randomised control trial. Outcomes will include programme uptake, attendance, changes in lifestyle, and weight variables to inform power calculations for a future definitive trial, fidelity of programme delivery, acceptability, satisfaction with the programme and perceptions of effectiveness. There is also potential to determine trial feasibility and potential to gather cost-effectiveness data.

## **Dr Himanshu Gupta**

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## Eligibility Criteria and Scholarship Provisions

**Eligibility:** The successful applicant will meet the eligibility criteria for admission to a Master by Research or Doctor of Philosophy degree at Charles Darwin University.

### **Scholarship Provisions:**

Candidates will be encouraged to seek Research Training Program (RTP) scholarship funding through Charles Darwin University. Further information about RTP scholarship application process, eligibility criteria and key dates can be found on this [CDU webpage](#)

A successful candidate who is a recipient of a primary scholarship such as RTP will be eligible to apply for a Menzies top-up scholarship to the value of \$10,000 per annum for up to 3.5 years. Successful candidates will receive \$3,500 per annum for up to 3.5 years to cover direct costs of the research.

### **Application Process**

Applicants should submit the following:

- Brief summary of why you want to complete the project
- Current CV
- Copies of certified academic transcripts
- Proof of Residency (not required for Australian citizens)

Applications close on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

For more information please contact Prof James Smith [james.smith@menzie.edu.au](mailto:james.smith@menzie.edu.au)