Impact Report 2017/18

Providing better patient outcomes to create a brighter future

Ramsay Hospital Research Foundation

A message from the Chair

It is my great pleasure to present this Impact Report from the Ramsay Hospital Research Foundation (RHRF) for 2017/18.

In line with RHRF's mission and values, we are constantly striving to provide better outcomes for our patients, to investigate the diseases and illnesses which affect them, and to progress the learning and development of those who care for them. We are committed to identifying areas where centralised support can be established to aid the development of research projects across Ramsay Health Care, and to identifying research projects that have the potential to improve outcomes and lead to the establishment of a comprehensive research network within Ramsay Health Care.

When RHRF was established, the directors decided we would not call for applications; rather, the CEO of the RHRF was given the task of identifying projects that fall within key strategic priority areas. As a result, there has been a strong focus on research programs which support the improvement of patient outcomes in mental health and rehabilitation. The Foundation is also seeking to fund and develop research in health services as this will contribute to the overall improvement in patient outcomes in a variety of disciplines.

When reviewing research projects, consideration is given to a variety of factors including; the potential of the research to positively impact patient outcomes, the level of interest among clinical, allied health, or nursing staff, the impact and value of the research to the community, whether the research can be undertaken across a number of sites within Ramsay Health Care, and to what extent variation in clinical services between sites will impact on the research that is to be undertaken.

Over the past 18 months, RHRF has been funding and developing a comprehensive Clinical Trials Network within Ramsay Health Care. The establishment of Clinical Trial Units at key Ramsay Health Care sites will facilitate the development of clinical research into the future. Access to clinical trials is also particularly important for patients and I am delighted with the work that has been undertaken to date.

To develop and maintain a sustainable research network, it is essential to form collaborations with clinicians, universities, medical research institutes and governments. This in turn will increase opportunities for Ramsay staff to participate in research projects and access training and education opportunities, enabling them to grow and develop the skills required as health care evolves. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and all of the researchers who have collaborated with RHRF to develop research within Ramsay Health Care.

This has been the first full year of operations for RHRF and it has been a great year. I would like to have my fellow directors and our CEO, Mrs. Nicola Ware, for their support and engagement as we have developed the activities of RHRF. In particular I would like to thank Professor Kathryn North for contributing her time and knowledge and assisting the board so selflessly.

Finally, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Paul Ramsay Foundation for its continued support of the Ramsay Hospital Research Foundation. Without the funding they have provided, RHRF would be unable to support so many worthwhile projects and we would not have been able to successfully integrate research into Ramsay Health Care. When Mr Paul Ramsay established Ramsay Health Care he wanted "People Caring for People" to be the cornerstone of the organisation. With the continued support of the Paul Ramsay Foundation, we are able to uphold Paul's legacy as we provide world-class care for our patients.

Danny Sims
Chair, Ramsay Hospital Research Foundation

A message from the CEO

Ramsay Health Care's reputation as a major contributor in the health research space continues to grow, with more than 100 clinical trials and research projects either currently underway or slated to commence across 25 Ramsay facilities in Australia. This is a fantastic result for the Ramsay Hospital Research Foundation, particularly as we have just marked our first full year of operation.

One of the key achievements of the Foundation over the past 12 months has been the establishment of the Ramsay Clinical Trials Network. Through the provision of funding to support the employment of clinical trials coordinators, RHRF has been able to assist with the activation of 12 new clinical trial sites. This in turn has led to the establishment of over 50 new clinical trials. As a result, due to the work of our collaborating organisations Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation and the Border Medical Oncology Research Unit, there are now over 100 clinical trials in operation. This extensive list of clinical trials covers a range of conditions – from ovarian cancer and prostate cancer to ischemic stroke and depression – and we are continually working to expand our research network. Access to clinical trials is seen as an important part of clinical care for patients and, through the work of the Clinical Trials Network, patients of Ramsay Health Care regularly have access to new and potentially life-changing therapies.

RHRF is fortunate to have the support of the Paul Ramsay Foundation, and thanks to the funding that they have provided, we have been able to allocate more than $4 million dollars to support seven key research projects over the last 12 months. These projects are predominantly in the areas of Mental Health and Rehabilitation and each project has the potential to improve patient outcomes in these critical areas.

Statistics from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show almost half of all Australians aged 16 – 85 will experience a disorder such as depression, anxiety or substance use disorder at some point in their lifetime. This highlights the need to provide specialised and timely treatment to those affected. However, despite depression and anxiety having such a huge burden in Australia, there is currently limited evidence available which outlines treatment outcomes in these conditions. This is why RHRF's depression and anxiety project, in collaboration with the International Consortium of Health Outcomes Measurement (ICHOM), is so important. By using each patient's own feedback on their quality of life following treatment, it aims to collect much-needed data on the effectiveness of mental health treatments in order to optimise future treatment programs, inform best clinical practice, and enhance patient outcomes.

In the rehabilitation space, RHRF is exploring a standardised program for patients who have undergone total knee arthroplasty or lumbar laminectomy surgeries and supporting the development of clinical decision support tools to help identify the type of rehabilitation a patient should undergo. As one in three Australians will be impacted by musculoskeletal conditions such as arthritis, back pain and osteoporosis each year, this is an important field of research and it is our hope that both of these projects will lead to an improvement of outcomes in rehabilitation following surgery.

With your continued support we will be able to improve patient outcomes and increase research productivity within Ramsay Health Care. I look forward to seeing how research conducted by our clinicians, allied health and nursing staff can help to shape the future of health care in Australia.

Nicola Ware
CEO, Ramsay Hospital Research Foundation

Research Projects: an overview

Ramsay Hospital Research Foundation seeks to fund projects that have the potential to change the delivery of health care and ultimately improve patient outcomes.

RHRF has funded the following seven projects in line with its core strategic priorities of mental health, rehabilitation, and health services research with a focus on innovation, technology and implementation.

- PATHways
- ICHOM Depression and Anxiety Project
- Rehabilitation Outcomes Database
- Testing Risk Genes in Depression
- New ‘precision rehabilitation’ research for knee replacement patients
- Evaluating the Implementation of Delirium Education Intervention
- Text Me Well

PATHways

Chief Investigator: Professor David Hunter (Chair in Rheumatology, Institute of Bone and Joint Research, The Kolling Institute, The University of Sydney) and Associate Professor Manuela Ferreira (NHMRC Principle Research Fellow)

Project Status: Currently recruiting

Expected Completion: June 2020

RHC Sites: Mt Wilga Private Hospital, Hunters Hill Private Hospital & Lawrence Hargrave Private Hospital

Funding Provided: $1,154,965

Project Overview

It is estimated 6.9 million Australians have a chronic condition such as arthritis, back pain or osteoporosis. More than 550,000 elective surgical procedures are performed each year in Australia for all musculoskeletal conditions and one in seven of these operations is for osteoarthritis (OA) of the knee or low back pain.

The rising prevalence of these conditions and ensuing surgical costs means quality of care and pricing have been identified for review. Moreover, post-surgical care, including inpatient rehabilitation for the knee and lumbar spine, is currently not standardised, sustainable or evidence-based. This contributes to substantial clinical variation and a wide range of outcomes.

PATHways is a randomised controlled trial designed to evaluate a 12 month symptom-monitoring and health-coaching approach using disruptive technology to increase function and physical activity for patients following inpatient rehabilitation after their total knee arthroplasty and spinal lumbar laminectomy surgeries. The proposed program will be compared to a control group which is akin to usual care.

Expected Outcome

The investigators believe the proposed standardised clinical pathway, health coaching, and disruptive technology rehabilitation program will be more effective than usual care in improving mobility, pain and function in people undergoing post-operative rehabilitation for total knee arthroplasty and lumbar laminectomy.

How will this project change health care?

PATHways seeks to demonstrate the overall benefit of a standardised rehabilitation pathway and the use of digital technology to support rehabilitation in the home. If this project achieves its overall aim, patients who undergo this type of surgery can expect to have a standardised pathway that provides them with a post-discharge guide and will improve the management of pain and mobility after their surgery, empowering patients to manage their own care.

ICHOM Depression and Anxiety Project

Chief Investigator: Professor Malcolm Hopwood (University of Melbourne)

Project Status: Ethics approval granted, currently recruiting

Expected Completion: Mid-2021

RHC Facilities: Albert Road Clinic, Northside Group (Cremorne Clinic, Macarthur Clinic, St Leonards Clinic, Wentworthville Clinic), New Farm Clinic, Adelaide Clinic, Hollywood Clinic, Southport Private and Warners Bay Private Hospital

Funding Provided: $377,100

ICHOM – measuring outcomes that matter

Ramsay has commenced measurement and benchmarking with the International Consortium of Health Outcomes Measurement (ICHOM), an international not-for-profit organisation established by Harvard Business School, Boston Consulting Group and the Karolinska Institute. The mission of the group is to unlock the potential of value-based health care by defining global standard sets of outcome measures that matter most to patients. These standardised surveys are known as patient reported outcome measures (PROMs).

What are PROMs?

Patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) are self-assessment tools which have been developed by clinicians and researchers. Patients are asked a series of questions designed to assess elements of their own health and quality of life. The results can demonstrate how a particular treatment, or a series of treatments, has impacted a patient's quality of life. More broadly, the collective results of the surveys can be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of care at a system level.

Project Overview

There is currently limited evidence to support treatment programs for depression and anxiety, despite this being a massive burden in Australia. The recent RANZCP Mood Disorder treatment guidelines highlighted available evidence is frequently constructed in samples of subjects who represent a highly selected and limited proportion of the overall population. Overall, this points to a clear need for greater development of effectiveness data, examining outcomes in real world populations undergoing clinical care.

In 2018, Ramsay Health Care launched the ICHOM Depression and Anxiety dataset to determine outcomes in patients treated for depression and anxiety. The aim of this project is to recruit more than 1,000 patients over an 18 month period, and to follow patients and their outcomes over two years. This project will be one of the largest of its kind and it is hoped that by collecting this data it will lead to better patient outcomes following treatment. This in turn is expected to lead to the development of new treatment programs that are designed to support the long term recovery of patients.

Expected Outcome

If this project is successful, it is expected that the collection of patient reported outcomes will become a part of standard of care for the treatment of depression and anxiety within Ramsay Health Care. The introduction of this validated assessment tool will result in the consistent evaluation of patients following treatment, better management of patient care amongst their multi-disciplinary team and better outcomes for patients after they receive treatment in a Ramsay Health Care Clinic.

How will this project change health care?

Currently the only assessment measures consistently collected for the treatment of mental health conditions are the HoNOS and MHQ14 surveys. If successful, it is expected that the collection of patient reported outcomes during and following treatment will become a part of routine treatment services within Ramsay. This will in turn enable the broader community to consider the benefit of the collection of PROMs and how these improve patient care.

Why are PROMs important?

Patient reported outcome measures have been used to improve communication between clinicians and patients. This is done by asking a patient to complete the relevant outcome assessment tool before a clinical consultation, then using the results of the assessment tool during the consultation.

This improved form of communication can also help both patient and clinician to reach agreement regarding future treatment. Ultimately, this improves the management of the patient's condition and in turn leads to an overall improvement in patient outcomes.

In addition, PROMs can assist when the patient is being cared for in an environment where members of the care team are routinely changing. In these circumstances, the patient responses can be assessed by the care team and compared to previous responses, allowing the care team to remain in control of and to understand how the patient is responding to treatment on a continuous basis.

Patient reported outcome measures are now being routinely used in Europe and in the USA with the aim of re-focusing the health care system on the patient. However, many academic leaders feel the true benefit of patient reported outcomes will only be achieved when the assessment tool is matched with the relevant clinical dataset. In Australia, consideration is being given as to how these assessment tools can become a part of clinical registries and databases.

Rehabilitation Outcomes Database

Chief Investigators: Margie Schache and Amanda Timmer (joint) (Donvale Rehabilitation Hospital)

Project Status: Ethics submission and protocol being developed, due to begin recruiting in early 2019

Expected Completion: Early 2020

RHC Facilities: Donvale Rehabilitation Hospital

Funding Provided: $62,141

Project Overview

Currently, there is no systematic collection of consistent, psychometrically sound and clinically useful outcome measure data for rehabilitation patients at Ramsay facilities.

This project aims to develop and test an electronic outcomes measurement database for use in rehabilitation settings. The database will collect both patient reported and therapist rated outcome measures at the start and end of each admission. There is also the potential to utilise these measures in day patient/outpatient and home-based settings. The outcome measures will be chosen based on known validity, reliability, and responsiveness to change in the rehabilitation population.

Expected Outcome

The establishment of an electronic database of outcome measures for all Donvale patients is expected to result in the consistent, accurate and timely collection of data in a central location. This can be used for quality improvement, additional research, and the improvement of rehabilitation programs at Donvale.

How will this project change health care?

Outcome measures collected at admission and discharge enable the tracking of patient progress throughout their rehabilitation program. This information is necessary for patients and treating therapists to set overall aims of rehabilitation programs, to direct possible treatment options, and to establish achievement of patient goals. Outcome data collected from all patients over long periods of time can be used to direct improvement in service delivery and to provide evidence for the effectiveness of rehabilitation. This project may be rolled out to all Ramsay rehabilitation facilities to benefit more patients, if successful.

What are Clinical Registries?

Clinical registries are databases where clinically relevant data has been systematically collected for every patient treated for a particular disease or condition. Clinical registries can be disease, procedure or device focused, and the use of this type of data is now being recognised as a means to improve patient outcomes and increase value in the health care system.

When the collection of clinically relevant data is expanded beyond the individual clinician to a population level, it can be used to determine outcomes at hospital, country, and state levels. This allows for comparison between individual hospitals and also helps to establish national averages across the health care system for each specific disease or condition. This information can be used to identify variations in care and highlight where changes in treatment are needed to improve patient outcomes.

In 2017, an economic analysis of clinical registries in Australia was conducted by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. This analysis found that clinical registries lead to improved clinical practice at a relatively low cost of investment. For every dollar that was invested in a clinical registry, it led to a return of between $2 – $7 for the health system. As a result of this analysis, a framework has been established for all clinical quality registries in Australia.

The overall benefit of clinical registries and having standardised clinical data collections is clear. This data, and the collection of Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMS), is paramount if we are to improve value and identify care variation in the future.

Testing Risk Genes in Depression

Chief Investigator: Professor Phillip Mitchell (University of New South Wales)

Project Status: Ethics approval being sought, recruitment expected to commence in early 2019

Expected Completion: Mid-2021

RHC Facilities: Northside Group (Cremorne Clinic, Macarthur Clinic, St Leonards Clinic, Wentworthville Clinic)

Funding Provided: $678,994

Project Overview

There is growing evidence suggesting a collection of genes may be involved in the development and progression of depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder (BD) and schizophrenia. Given there are likely to be multiple genes involved in these diseases, a statistical calculation called a polygenic risk score (PRS) has been developed. The purpose of this risk score is to provide an overall indication as to whether an individual is likely to develop a mental health disorder and current research indicates patients with a high PRS may be more likely to develop these diseases.

This project seeks to investigate whether the assessment of PRS assists clinically in the prediction of outcomes for patients following treatment for major depressive disorder (MDD) and bipolar disorder. If a link between the polygenic risk score and the treatment outcome can be determined, this form of testing could be incorporated into clinical practice and will assist psychiatrists to determine the best treatment options for patients.

While the study will primarily be based at Northside Group, St Leonards Clinic, recruitment will also be actively undertaken in the initial phase of the study through the other Northside Group Clinics followed by other Ramsay Hospitals nationally. The project is seeking to recruit 350 patients to the study, and all patients will be followed for a period of 12 weeks while they undergo treatment.

Expected Outcome

It is hoped this study will begin to demonstrate the clinical value of the polygenic risk score and establish whether there is a link between this score and patient outcomes after treatment.

How will this project change health care?

The outcomes of this project will enable more rational decision-making for clinicians treating acutely depressed patients and improve both prognoses and treatment outcomes.

New ‘precision rehabilitation’ research for knee replacement patients

Chief Investigator: Professor Michael Nilsson (University of Newcastle)

Project Status: Protocol development and database establishment underway, ethics approval expected in early 2019, recruitment expected to commence in mid-2019.

Expected Completion: Mid-2022

RHC Facilities: Kareena Private Hospital, North Shore Private Hospital, Lake Macquarie Private Hospital and Pindara Private Hospital

Funding Provided: $1,546,860

Project Overview

The choice of whether to send a patient who has undergone joint replacement surgery to rehabilitation is currently driven by the clinician; however time constraints and other factors may impact comprehensive understanding of an individual’s situation. Consequently, patients who could benefit from rehabilitation may miss out on that treatment, while those who would not benefit from rehabilitation may be sent to undergo the therapy. This can lead to overuse of hospital services and can impact overall patient outcomes.

The focus of the current project is to develop, implement, test, optimise and validate a Clinical Decision Support (CDS) tool to deliver better and more personalised rehabilitative treatments for patients undergoing total knee arthroplasty. This project will use data collected from 2,000 patients to validate the CDS tool and, once developed, it is hoped this tool will eventually be expanded to include other forms of joint surgery over time. Once the CDS tool is operational, investigators can determine for each type of surgery whether patients with the same initial score differed in their overall outcomes due to the rehabilitation therapy that they received. The answer can drive different rehabilitation prescriptions for different patient groups.

Expected Outcome

Researchers are expected to have a validated CDS tool which has the ability to predict recovery outcomes at three months post surgery, based on information collected prior to and shortly after surgery. It will also demonstrate how the impact of rehabilitative intervention varies as a function of risk strata.

By demonstrating these outcomes, a tool will be developed that will better match patients’ needs with rehabilitative options, and will evaluate future rehabilitative services. The natural extension of this project would be to use the prediction outcomes generated using the CDS tool to further refine current rehabilitative offerings in order to enhance their ability to deliver best possible outcomes.

How will this project change health care?

Ultimately, the major benefit of a CDS tool is in its ability to match patients to optimal service interventions, maximising the potential for good outcomes. Those who implement a CDS tool which significantly improves patient outcomes will be placed at the forefront of precision rehabilitative medicine.

Evaluating the Implementation of Delirium Education Intervention

Chief Investigator: Professor Victoria Traynor (University of Wollongong)

Project Status: Ethics application being prepared, Training & Education Sessions to begin in March 2019

Expected Completion: February 2019

RHC Facilities: St George Private Hospital, Wollongong Private Hospital, and Kareena Private Hospital

Funding Provided: $89,950

Project Overview

As many as 60% of older people who are admitted to acute health care settings experience a form of delirium. This can lead to a wide range of long-term health problems. With this in mind, Ramsay will prioritise delirium care as a target area for improvement within its services for older patients.

This project aims to educate clinical staff in best practice delirium care as part of usual business, replacing current educational activities with an innovative multi-modal education intervention – a method of delivery which ensures accessibility and sustainable change. Clinical "champions", in the form of Clinical Nurse Consultants and Clinical Nurse Educators, will be recruited and trained to deliver the education activities to other staff.

Expected Outcome

As a result of this education, clinical staff at Ramsay facilities will have improved confidence and competence in the delivery of delirium care and will ensure best practice guidelines, policies and clinical pathways are used across the network. It will assist to reduce length of hospital stays, mortality rates, and family burden, while improving the detection and treatment of this condition.

How will this project change health care?

The acute and reversible nature of delirium provides clinicians with the potential to prevent and treat the condition to reduce its financial and emotional effects on patients, their families, and health care providers. By delivering this education, clinicians and health care providers in Ramsay hospitals will be much better equipped to diagnose, treat, and prevent delirium occurrences in patients. This will lead to better overall care and, therefore, better outcomes for patients affected by delirium.

Text Me Well

Chief Investigator: Professor Maree Hackett (George Institute for Global Health) & Professor Malcolm Hopwood (Albert Road Clinic)

Project Status: Protocol developed and ethics approval granted

Expected Completion: To be determined

RHC Facilities: Albert Road Clinic

Funding Provided: $100,000 to date (further funding TBA)

Project Overview

When patients are discharged after treatment for depression and anxiety in hospital, it is often difficult to assess the long term outcomes. In the Text Me Well trial, the investigators are seeking to establish whether repeated semi personalised messages sent via SMS impact the long term outcomes for patients after treatment for depression.

The text messages will provide advice, motivation and support and are designed to help the patient to maintain mental wellbeing and a healthy lifestyle after treatment. The messages are specifically designed to promote a reduction in the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs, a reduction in stress, improve adherence to medication and treatment follow-up, as well as provide general support over a six-month period.

Text Me Well is being developed by investigators at the George Institute for Global Health and the Albert Road Clinic in Melbourne. RHRF has funded the development of the protocol and the text message data bank, and has enabled the investigators to seek ethics approval. Further funding of the trial, either through RHRF or other sources, is currently being explored. Once further funding is identified, the trial will be offered to patients who have been treated for depression at a Ramsay Health Care Clinic. Patients will be enrolled in the study following discharge and will be randomised to a group who receives text messages for six months or a group who does not. The participants will be assessed for impact at both six and 12 months following discharge from the facility.

Expected Outcome

The hypothesis and design of the study is based on a similar study which evaluated the effect of regular text messaging on the treatment of patients with cardiovascular disease. That study demonstrated patients who received the text messages had improved outcomes following treatment and then continued messaging for a period of time. Based on these results, the investigators have evidence that messaging does impact outcomes, but it is unknown whether this result can be translated to patients who are experiencing depression and anxiety.

How will this project change health care?

If successful, the Text Me Well trial will demonstrate how a simple, low-cost, and safe intervention can sustain patients' treatment outcomes after discharge, while simultaneously lowering their treatment costs.

Clinical Trials Network: an overview

A clinical trial is used to test whether a new medication or treatment is effective in treating diseases like cancer.

Benefits of clinical trials include:

- Rapid scientific advances in global cancer research which have shifted towards targeted cancer therapies
- Potential to receive a better treatment than the standard care currently on offer
- Harmonisation of regulators resulting in early access to drugs and devices
- Targeted therapies which have the potential to dramatically improve patient quality of life and survival
- Improved outcomes, even for those not given the treatment under investigation
- Improved quality of care leading to improved outcomes for all patients, even for those not participating in a trial

Many studies conducted through Ramsay are used to guide clinical practice and are translated into benefits for all patients with that particular condition.

Clinical Trial Units – Site Summaries for the Year

Hospital	State	No. of trials open^ Jan '17 – Jun '18	No. of trials closed^^ Jan '17 – Jun '18	Types of Diseases
Pindara Private Hospital	QLD	2	1	Bladder Cancer, Prostate Cancer, Liver Cancer, Breast Cancer, Endometrial Cancer, Colorectal Cancer, Renal Cell Carcinoma, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
GMRF#		32	15	Melanoma, Lung Cancer and Lung Disease, Metastatic Disease, Prostate and Gastric Cancer, Liver diseases
John Flynn Private Hospital		3	1	Bladder Cancer, Colorectal Cancer, Metastatic Disease, Head & Neck Cancer, Prostate Cancer, Lung cancer
Sunshine Coast University Private Hospital*		0	0	
St George Private Hospital	NSW	7	5	Genitourinary, Prostate, Gynaecological, Breast, Gastrointestinal solid tumours
Lake Macquarie Private Hospital		7	3	Colorectal, Breast, Pancreatic Cancer, Melanoma, Gastrointestinal Cancer, Cardiology, Anaesthetics
Southern Highlands Private Hospital		3	0	Breast, Bowel, and Metastatic Cancers, Renal Cell Carcinoma
Wollongong Private Hospital		0	0	Prostate Cancer, Lung Cancer
North Shore Private Hospital*		0	0	
Border Medical Oncology Unit#		57	0	Various Solid & Haematological Malignancies
Peninsula Private Hospital	VIC	3	0	Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia, Follicular Lymphoma, Renal Cell Carcinoma
Warringal Private Hospital		1	0	Colorectal Cancer
Albert Road Clinic		1	0	Major Depressive Disorder, Anxiety, Depression, PTSD
Hollywood Private Hospital	WA	2	1	Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Prostate Cancer, Renal Cell Carcinoma, Neurology Disease
Total		**118**	**26**	

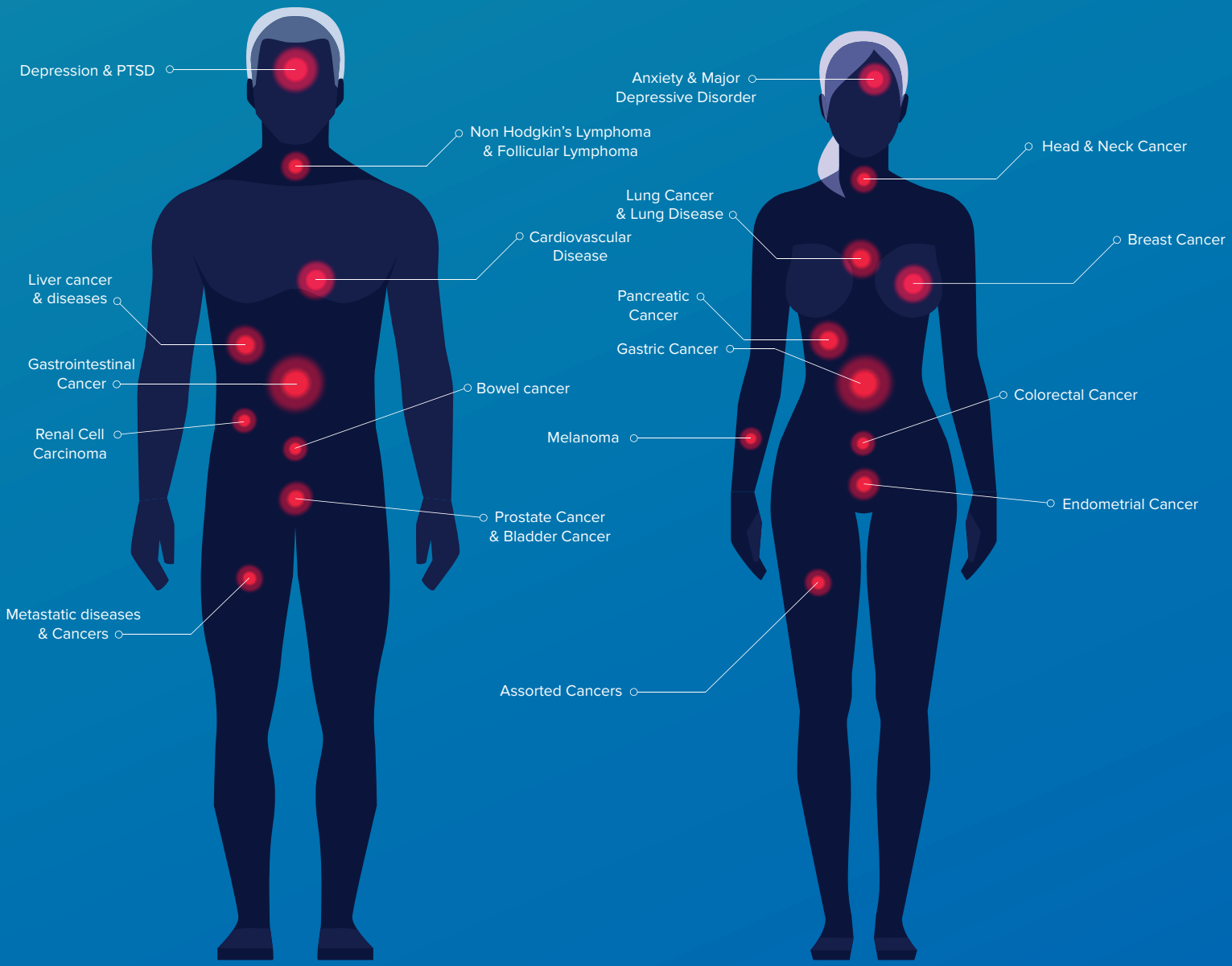
^Denotes trials which are open to patient recruitment or where patients are receiving active treatment/follow-up as part of a trial.

^^Denotes trials which are closed to activity and/or archived.

*Site not yet opened for new trials.

Border Medical Oncology Research Unit and Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation are both external not for profit groups that coordinate clinical trials within a Ramsay Hospital. Both groups are a welcome addition to the Ramsay Clinical Trials Network and we value their engagement and feedback.

Clinical trials: types of diseases under investigation



Clinical Trial Units – Site Details for the Year

Hollywood Private Hospital

Hollywood continues to be an active and growing site, with two actively recruiting trials, one trial in set-up phase, and a further four likely to open in 2019. The site was the first (and is currently the only) site recruiting for the UNITY NHL trial – a trial that is looking at a new treatment for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Hollywood has also been one of the top five recruiters internationally for a renal cell carcinoma trial.

Hollywood continues to work to engage with new doctors and to expand the role of the clinical trial unit to other disciplines. The site looks forward to expanding further and engaging with new disciplines in 2019.

John Flynn Private Hospital

John Flynn has recently expanded its oncology unit and as a result has established a dedicated research space. In June 2018 John Flynn was the first site to recruit and treat a patient for a trial involving a treatment for advanced cancer and was the first site nationally to open a study in gastric cancer. The site continues to grow and expand and remains focused on the development of oncology clinical trials. The site looks forward to more patients enrolling in trials in 2019.

St George Private Hospital

St George Private has been an active clinical trials site for many years, with a strong focus on sponsored and industry clinical trials. It has successfully run clinical trials that provided treatment options for a range of cancers and continues to explore and develop treatment options for cancer with industry partners.

Greenslopes Private & Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation

Gallipoli Medical Research Foundation (GMRF) is a not for profit group based at Greenslopes Private Hospital (GPH). RHRF is very fortunate to work with such an experienced trials unit and as a result, the patients at GPH are able to access a nationally recognised clinical trials unit that continues to offer excellence in research and clinical care. GMRF was awarded the ARCS Investigator "site of the year" in 2018, a well-deserved award for the unit. GMRF continues to offer clinical trials in oncology, lung and liver diseases and is very experienced in the delivery of clinical trials in melanoma. As a result, the site is well-practised in the use of new single and combination drug trials and emerging checkpoint inhibitors and immunotherapies.

Pindara Private Hospital

Pindara continues to develop interest in oncology clinical trials and has an active clinical trials pipeline. The group has received interest from investigators in haematology, rheumatology and lung diseases and is currently the lead site for a number of Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) submissions. RHRF looks forward to expanding this unit and the number of trials being run in 2019.

Warringal Private Hospital

Warringal Private was the first hospital in the newly-formed clinical trials network to open a trial in 2017. The site continues to grow and develop trial activity and is actively seeking clinicians to establish clinical trials within the unit. We hope to develop a collaboration with the Austin Hospital in the near future which will contribute to the growth of clinical trials at Warringal. The development of new trial opportunities and increased collaboration between the public and private hospitals is an avenue that we continue to explore both here and more broadly within the clinical trials network.

Peninsula Private Hospital

Peninsula Private has had an amazing year, experiencing a significant increase in activity for the clinical trials unit. The support of primary investigator Dr Patricia Walker has greatly assisted this site in securing trials in a range of haematology disorders. Under the leadership of Jodie Wainwright, Peninsula was the lead recruiter for an international study in untreated Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia and was the first site in the world to open to recruitment for an international study in Marginal Zone Lymphoma. The site continues to open and recruit patients for trials in a range of disorders and hopes to secure further oncology trials in the new year.

Southern Highlands Private Hospital

Southern Highlands Private has been an active clinical trials site for many years, with a strong focus on the investigator driven clinical trials. These trials are often run by the Collaborative Clinical Trials Groups and offer the opportunity for medical oncologists to work collaboratively to develop and deliver clinical trials. Southern Highlands continues to be an active clinical trials unit and it is hoped that additional medical oncologists can be attracted to develop trials with the unit in 2019.

Lake Macquarie Private Hospital

Lake Macquarie has been an active clinical trials site, establishing new trials and working collaboratively with other hospitals and groups in the region. The establishment of a multidisciplinary, collaborative clinical trials centre has worked well with the sites working to develop and deliver a range of collaborative group and industry initiated clinical trials. The high degree of collaboration between public and private hospitals and clinicians in this region, and the multidisciplinary nature of care, is a leading example for other sites within the network.

Border Medical Oncology Research Unit & Border Cancer Hospital

Border Medical Oncology Research Unit (BMORU) is a not for profit group based at the Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre. RHRF is very fortunate to work with such an experienced trials unit and, as a result, patients at Border Cancer Hospital (also located at the Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre) are able to access a large variety of clinical trials that continue to offer treatment options in a regional setting to which patients may not otherwise have access.

Wollongong Private Hospital

RHRF were very excited to have Wollongong Private Hospital join the network in mid-2018. The site has been awarded two clinical trials in prostate and lung cancer and both trials are expected to be open for recruitment in early 2019. Next year we hope to engage more doctors and increase the number of opportunities to establish clinical trials at this site.

North Shore Private Hospital

North Shore Private joined the clinical trials network in mid-2018. The site has developed a collaborative relationship with the clinical trials unit at North Shore Public and RHRF looks forward to working with the public and collaborating on clinical trials as we establish this unit.

Sunshine Coast University Private Hospital

Sunshine Coast University Private has recently joined the clinical trials network and their new clinical trials coordinator will commence in early 2019.

Albert Road Clinic

Albert Road Clinic joined the clinical trials network in mid-2018, with the establishment of their first investigator initiated clinical trial funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). The unit has also recently been awarded two sponsored clinical trials which will commence in 2019.

Making Research Easier

Ramsay Hospital Research Foundation seeks to improve patient outcomes through the conduct and translation of clinical research into patient care.

By establishing a robust research network within Ramsay Health Care, RHRF is strategically moving to overcome key challenges involved with conducting research in the private sector. Some hurdles in Australia include difficulty establishing active research units and facilitating collaborations between independent researchers, clinical researchers, and hospitals. One of the biggest impediments is a shortage of systems to support ethical review and research governance.

A robust system of research ethics and research governance is being developed within Ramsay Health Care, which will build upon the fantastic work already undertaken by several research ethics committees within the organisation. In 2019, supported by RHRF, the existing ethics committees will transition into three new state-based committees, which will be supported by clear policies and procedures as well as accredited by the NHMRC. A research information management system will also be introduced to support the ethics committees and research governance processes within the hospitals. This will make research more transparent to the organisation and is intended to increase collaborations between hospitals.

The Foundation is also seeking to build partnerships with universities and medical research institutes to extend the potential for collaborations and development of clinical research projects. These associations will bring together groups of experienced researchers to assist with the development of research projects and the refinement of ideas. These collaborations will maximise the opportunity for research funded by RHRF and conducted within Ramsay Health Care to be published in peer-reviewed journals – for the benefit of the broader community.

RHRF has also established the Ramsay PhD Program which will provide funding to support the development of two PhD students each year. The program will be available to Ramsay Health Care staff members and will provide the opportunity for the student to work with external collaborators to answer critical research questions that will improve patient outcomes.

Finally, RHRF is also facilitating the translation of research into clinical care, working with hospital executives and doctors to ensure all research has a positive impact by improving patient outcomes.

Thank you to the Paul Ramsay Foundation

Ramsay Hospital Research Foundation would like to thank its major supporter, the Paul Ramsay Foundation, for its ongoing commitment to the advancement of health and medical research.

About the Paul Ramsay Foundation

Paul Ramsay Foundation, Australia's largest philanthropic foundation, was established from the Estate of the late Paul Ramsay AO who passed away in 2014.

Paul Ramsay Foundation is committed to addressing the root causes of disadvantage in the Australian community, specifically as they relate to health and education, and has a strong commitment to changing the status quo and improving the lives of Australians.

With a focus on multidisciplinary collaboration, the Foundation invests in the development and implementation of practical solutions that empower communities and result in long-term, systemic change. They work as a catalyst for change, seeking out and partnering with the brightest minds to unlock evidence, build momentum and maximise impact.

2020 goals

By 2020 RHRF will have achieved the following:

1. Funded significant research projects that have led to an improvement in patient outcomes and changes to the delivery of care.
2. Through registries and PROMs, collected data to begin to analyse the differences across sites and develop potential research opportunities.
3. Grown the organisation to be a stable funder of research across the Ramsay Health Care network and beyond.
4. Established a recognised research network within Ramsay Health Care that actively embeds research in the provision of clinical care.
5. Secured the support of expert academic partners in mental health, health services research and rehabilitation to facilitate research excellence.
6. Leveraged our funding to gain additional corporate support and community donations.

How to get involved

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Ramsay Hospital
Research Foundation