THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

World Cancer Day

Cancer Health Services Research

4 February 2022

World Cancer Day 2022 reflections from the Cancer Health Services Research group

The Cancer Health Services Research group's mission is to improve value-based cancer services across the care continuum using real-world outcomes and cost data.

The theme for World Cancer Day 2022 is 'Close the Care Gap' and we asked the Cancer Health Services Research team to reflect about the work they do in cancer research and how their work has impact and contributes to closing the gap. Below are reflections from some of the team.

Professor Maarten IJzerman, Head of Cancer Health Services Research *"My team and I use real-world data to analyse how patients with cancer can best be treated so we can inform health policy makers and professionals to ensure equal access to the best possible care for everyone."*

Dr Hadi Khorshidi *"I use modeling techniques and data analysis to evaluate scenarios for selecting the optimal genomic testing strategy to minimise the diagnosis time, accelerate early intervention and reduce total cost."*

Piers Gillett *"Despite the improvements in cancer care, those who don't live in large metropolitan areas may not have access to nor see the same quality of care. A key component of my work investigates the differences in access and provision of cancer care for those who live in remote and rural Victoria. Hopefully with a firm idea of the differences in outcomes for the rural population, these differences can be addressed."*

Bishma Jayathilaka *"The high-level goal of my research is to identify which patients would experience serious toxicity from cancer treatments. With that knowledge, patients can decide with their healthcare providers which treatment strategies are best suited to them and reduce the chance of adverse effects related to cancer treatments."*

Karen Trapani *"Understanding how cancer treatment is delivered and identifying areas of disparities is necessary to affect change. Working in collaboration with consumer representatives improves our outcomes and keeps us very close to the purpose of our work."*

Sophie O'Haire *"I work with the health services team through using genomic data and epidemiology to help capture the value that new diagnostic technologies can provide cancer patients. It's really rewarding to support more patients having greater access to precision oncology through looking at the impact this has in the research space and using this evidence to support public health decisions around genomic testing."*

Dr Riccarda Peters *"Learning that you have cancer can be a confronting and frightening experience, and the variation in cancer treatment options can be particularly confusing for patients. My research explores patient preferences for cancer treatments using focus groups and experimental surveys. I'm exploring questions such as 'how do men who were diagnosed with localized prostate cancer decide on a particular treatment?'. I work closely with a team of consumers from the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre (VCCC) to design studies that lead to outcomes that are meaningful and relevant to patients."*

Martin Vu *"Understanding the health economic value of genomic sequencing for patients living with a blood cancer will facilitate earlier and wider access to personalised and precision medicine. I chose to pursue a PhD with the Cancer Health Services Research because I am passionate about addressing the health policy barriers for the provision and delivery of genomics in cancer services within public health systems. My research will 'Close the Care Gap' by building the health economic evidence for the clinical implementation of genomic sequencing so that all patients living with a blood cancer can receive the most appropriate cancer care tailored to their individual genomic profile."*

Mussab Fagery *"My PhD project will be addressing the translation gap of complex genomic testing (through liquid biopsy) into cancer health services. The project will support both identification and prioritisation of the value proposition for using liquid biopsies in cancer management. Recently, clinical research directed toward the use of liquid biopsy, as an alternative tool to tissue biopsy, showed significant promise in several clinical applications such as early detection and screening, adjuvant therapy guidance, as well as treatment selection and monitoring."*