



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

World Cancer Day

Cancer Health Services Research

4 February 2023

World Cancer Day 2023 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 World Cancer Day theme for 2022 – 2024 is 'Close the Care Gap' and in 2023 there is a focus on equity. The Cancer Health Services Research team take the opportunity 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.



Dr Jennifer Soon *"I'm interested in the concept of value in healthcare and how we can improve equitable access to novel and impactful cancer medicines. This is an international challenge that is very much shared by Australia. Part of my research has used a novel methodology for horizon scanning to help regulators and researchers prioritise areas of evidence development, in the hope that we can improve the effectiveness of the regulatory process. I also aim to look at how we measure value in health, the importance of the consumer voice, and how novel medicines can be an example of high value care."*

Piers Gillett *"Quality cancer care is not necessarily equally accessible to all Victorians. Those living outside large metropolitan centres can face additional challenges in receiving appropriate care due to the burden of travel to receive care. A key pillar of my work is investigating these differences for rural and remote Victorians with the hope that elucidating the differences will allow for targeted solutions to improve the situation. I also work directly with consumers in designing and investigating research questions led by the consumers themselves. By working with consumers, we can investigate the gaps in care consumers experienced or are interested in based upon their own lived experience, thus providing a very important and frequently underutilised perspective."*



Dr Hadi Khorshidi *"I use simulation modelling techniques, early cost-effectiveness analysis and data mining to evaluate scenarios for cancer diagnosis and treatment considering uncertainty, numerous factors, multiple criteria and complex interactions within healthcare systems. One example is to optimise genomic testing strategy for cancer diagnosis and finding the best treatment at the individualised level for cancer patients. The goal is to minimise diagnosis time, accelerate early intervention, and reduce total cost to ensure cancer care is accessible and affordable for everyone and provide equity."*

Karen Trapani *“Real-world data analysis is the foundation for identifying disparities in cancer care and is a crucial first step in addressing inequity. By leveraging the power of data, we can uncover hidden patterns and trends that reveal where the gaps in care exist, and take targeted action to close them, ensuring that every patient has the best possible care, regardless of their background or circumstances.”*



Dr Fanny Franchini *“I aim to transform cancer care through the use of data. By connecting health data sources, I create valuable insights to enhance public health and improve precision medicine for patients with cancer. My drive stems from my passion for cancer research and data science, and I collaborate closely with consumers to design research that meets their needs. With real-world data analysis, I bring attention to disparities in cancer care so that actions can be taken to address them. My ultimate goal is to make sure every patient receives the best possible care, and I am using data to make it happen.”*

Martin Vu *“As a PhD student, I am particularly interested in the opportunities of genomic testing for people with blood cancer. Genomic testing provides a deeper understanding of the molecular changes that drive individual cancers, which can help clinicians choose more effective treatments while minimising the side effects for each patient. Unfortunately, there are several factors including high cost, limited availability and lack of health insurance coverage that can make it more difficult for people with blood cancer to get genomic testing. My research focuses on understanding the health economic value of genomic testing for people living with blood cancer. More specifically, I seek to determine the impact of genomic testing on the cost and health outcomes of people with blood cancer. I believe that my work has the potential to make a real difference for people with blood cancer by informing policy decisions on how genomic testing should be funded so that all people with blood cancer are afforded the best opportunities to receive the right care that they need.”*



Bishma Jayathilaka *“The biggest challenge in cancer health services is not one thing in particular; it is the complexity of balancing available treatment options with the needs and goals of individual patients and their families while mitigating and managing the potential for serious adverse events. All of this is in the setting of a growing burden on hospital resources. My research aims to interrogate real-world data for predictive factors of immune-related adverse events that may help patients and providers with treatment decisions involving a subset of cancer immunotherapies. By identifying patients who may be more likely to experience serious toxicity from cancer treatments, 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.”*

Mussab Fagery *“Unite in the battle against cancer with the strength of liquid biopsy. As a PhD student, I am passionately committed to unlocking the full potential of blood-based testing in early detection and screening. Through my PhD research, I aim to shed light on the cost-effectiveness of liquid biopsy through early health economic modeling and reveal the health economic benefits of genomic testing through liquid biopsy, enhancing the current standard of care. Let us work together to create a brighter future for cancer patients.”*

