World Cancer Day 2021 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.

On World Cancer Day 2021, 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 cancer. Below are reflections from some of the team.

Professor Maarten IJzerman, Head of Cancer Health Services Research *"Cancer outcomes have improved remarkably over the last decades due to new treatments, faster diagnoses and better ways to deliver cancer care. I am keen to improve cancer outcomes by ensuring new diagnostics and treatments are available for all but targeted at those who may benefit and at an affordable price. We do so by analysing large data-sets to map treatment patterns, outcomes, and costs and use this to help consumers, clinicians, industry and governments to make better decisions."*

Dr Koen Degeling *"Learning from the experience of every cancer patient through real-world data provides opportunities to improve care for future patients and inform the development and evaluation of new treatments and devices. My research aims to utilize such real-world data through computer simulations, in which we combine these data with other information to model clinical pathways and evaluate different scenarios. By developing and disseminating these methods, I aim to empower more researchers to utilize the full potential of real-world data and learn from the experience of every patient."*

Dr Riccarda Peters *"I'm involved in a project that aims to improve outcomes for patients with localised prostate cancer through personalised management. The aim is to obtain insights into the preferences of patients to follow a biomarker-based treatment recommendation. This program is exciting because it was developed in collaboration with representatives from the VCCC-Cancer Consumers Advisory Committee and I get to work closely with consumer representatives along the way - truly patient empowered research!"*

Dr Nina Afshar *"I'm a cancer epidemiologist and my research focus on disparities in survival outcomes and resource utilisation in colorectal cancer patients using clinical registries linked to other health-related datasets. I also work on trends and inequalities in cancer patient survival in Victoria, Australia; with an emphasis of identifying the underlying causes of socio-economic inequalities in survival from colon cancer."*

Martin Vu *"Genomic testing plays a critical role for the clinical management for people living with blood cancer in getting the right care to the right patient. But genomic testing is not always readily available to patients. My contribution to cancer research is in understanding how genomic testing can be used to improve health outcomes for people living with blood cancer and to demonstrate the economic value of these diagnostic testing technologies to the health system."*

Dr Fanny Franchini *"My work focuses on using real-world data in order to map treatment sequences and toxicities in several cancers, as well as building predictive models to identify optimal clinical pathways thus improving patient outcomes. The overarching goal of my research is to generate meaningful and actionable clinical insights."*

Karen Trapani *"Using real-world administrative health data to better understand Australian cancer treatment patterns will support better access to new cancer treatments for Australian cancer patients. My work as project and data manager and research fellow for the PRIMCAT program is focussed on this outcome."*

Dr Jennifer Soon *"I am a Medical Oncologist who has contributed to cancer research throughout my training career. I am about to commence my PhD in real-world data analysis in cancer, and am extremely excited to have some dedicated time to learn new skills and advance knowledge about health services delivery and outcomes."*

Sophie O'Haire *"I have been working on studies around the clinical impact and implementation of complex genomic sequencing in patients with advanced solid tumours to improve treatment options and health outcomes. My research will continue to explore optimal strategies for translating genomic profiling into clinical use on a large scale, with particular interest in novel approaches to quantifying the value of genomic information and assessing the efficiency in population testing algorithms to balance limited resources with maximising biomarker identification and the benefits of precision oncology."*

Amanda Pereira-Salgado *"I am involved in cancer health services research where I primarily work with real-world data from various clinical registries. With a focus on health economics, I have evaluated how treatment sequencing strategies effect survival and cost outcomes in patients with advanced prostate cancer. Additionally, examined real-world differences in survival of patients with borderline resectable pancreatic cancer who have received neoadjuvant treatment versus immediate surgical resection. The work is interesting and has involved collaboration with people from a range of disciplines to ensure consideration of important clinical and cost outcomes."*