**UQ Winter Research Project Description**

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| **Project title:** | **Substance use and traumatic brain injury: Exploring the nexus between causes and outcomes.** |
| **Project duration, hours of engagement & delivery mode** | Duration of the project is 4 weeks at 25 hours per week.The project can be completed under a remote working arrangement with some negotiated onsite attendance.  |
| **Description:** | Alcohol and other substance use have been commonly implicated in both the incidence of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and as a complication encountered during rehabilitation that leads to poorer outcomes. TBI is a disruption to normal brain function caused by an external force. Majority of TBIs are mild, and most commonly sustained by young males aged between 15 to 24 years. Causes of TBI include falls (34%), motor vehicle accidents (31%), and assault (12%; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021).  The prevalence of alcohol intoxication at time of injury has been found to be as high as 37–51% (Parry-Jones et al., 2006). Pre-TBI history of alcohol use problems has also been reported at 37-66%, which may make abstinence difficult for clients to maintain post-TBI and impact negatively on functional outcomes (Parry-Jones et al., 2006; Corrigan, 1995). It can also increase the risk of TBI recurrence. Less is known about use of illicit substances, co-morbid mental health problems, and the impact of post-injury substance use on engagement in rehabilitation and functional outcomes. An updated systematic review of the literature is warranted to inform clinical practice. The review will aim to answer the following questions:1. What proportion of patients with TBI (a) were intoxicated at the time of injury, (b) had a pre-injury history of substance misuse, and (c) misused substances post-injury?
2. What influence, if any, did alcohol or other substance misuse have on outcomes for patients with TBI?
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| **Expected outcomes and deliverables:** | This project will allow for skill development in carrying out a systematic review of the literature with librarian support, data extraction, critique of evidence and formulation of clinical implications. There may be opportunity to audit and analyse existing TBI patient data from a specialised outreach service. This project will provide an opportunity to work with an interprofessional research team with experience in neurorehabilitation, addiction and mental health services. Students will be supported to write-up any analysis undertaken toward publication, gain valuable research experience, and build collaborations with researchers and clinicians in the field.  |
| **Suitable for:** | This project is open to applications from students with a background in allied health i.e. occupational therapy and psychological sciences. Students currently enrolled at UQ in the 3rd or 4th year (1st or 2nd year graduate-entry masters) of study preferred.  |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr Hannah Gullo |
| **Further info:** | Applicants may contact hannah.gullo@uq.edu.au for further information about the parameters of the project prior to submitting an application. |