**2023 UQ Winter Research Project Description**

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| **Project title:** | **A year in the life: The impact of MND dysarthria on close communication partners** |
| **Project duration, hours of engagement & delivery mode** | * 20 hours a week for 4 weeks (during the winter break)

COVID-19 considerations: *Flexible arrangements for working remotely can be accommodated.* |
| **Description:** | Motor neurone disease (MND) is a fatal neurodegenerative disorder of the motor system, impacting an individual’s ability to walk, breathe, swallow, and speak. The progressive loss of communication is one of the most distressing and debilitating symptoms for people with MND (PwMND). However, little is known about the impacts of progressive communication loss experienced by PwMND on their close communication partners despite research showing carers of PwMND experience depression (Trail et al., 2003), reduced social closeness with family and friends (Mckelvey et al., 2012), and lower quality of life compared to other progressive neurodegenerative diseases (Kristjanson et al., 2006). Therefore, the aim of this project is to identify the impact progressive dysarthria experienced by PwMND has on close communication partners with disease progression.  |
| **Expected outcomes and deliverables:** | The winter research scholar can expect to learn a number of research skills such as transcription of interviews, data checking, data extraction, and qualitative methodologies. General skills the winter scholar will also gain include valuable skills in teamwork and general project management skills. Depending on interest, the winter scholar may have the opportunity to contribute to a publication. |
| **Suitable for:** | This project is open to applications from UQ speech pathology highly motivated and organised students from the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences who have completed at least 2 years of study.  |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr Rebecca Packer and Dr Salma Charania |
| **Further info:** | Please contact Dr Charania at s.cahrania@uq.edu.au for further information about the project |