**UQ Summer Research Project Description - 2026**

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| **Project title:** | **Application of the clinical grading system for nociplastic pain to patients with whiplash** |
| **Hours of engagement & delivery mode** | The successful candidate will be engaged in the project for 20 – 36 hrs per week during the official program dates 12 Jan 2025 – 20 Feb 2026. |
| **Description:** | Altered nociceptive signal processing in the central nervous system (CNS) has been suggested to contribute to the pain experience in many chronic musculoskeletal conditions, including lateral elbow tendinopathy (LET). In 2019, a task force of the IASP proposed a mechanistic descriptor called ‘nociplastic pain’ to acknowledge mounting evidence that sensitisation of the nociceptive system may support chronic pain states in the absence of tissue injury or somatosensory nervous system lesions. Recently, clinical criteria and a grading system was published to identify nociplastic pain experienced in the musculoskeletal system. The aims of the current study are to apply the clinical grading system in a cohort of attending a whiplash injury clinic. Previously collected data from participants attending the clinic will be used to identify probable cases of nociplastic pain. |
| **Expected learning outcomes and deliverables:** | The eligible student will be expected to convert paper-based records into electronic records, including use of an electronic body chart. The student will need to identify relevant information from records to determine whether criteria is met. The student will use an excel spreadsheet to collect data and apply the classification system, perform basic statistical comparisons and create tables and flowcharts. The student will gain an appreciation of the features that discriminate pain types and how this information can be used to support patients to receive the right treatments. |
| **Suitable for:** | This project is open to physiotherapy students of 2nd year level or higher. |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Brooke Coombes |
| **Further info:** | Please contact Brooke Coombes to discuss your application prior to submitting. [B.coombes@uq.edu.au](mailto:B.coombes@uq.edu.au) |