Sydney HealthPartners
Clinical Academic Group



Geriatric Medicine



About us

The Sydney Health Partners Geriatric Medicine Clinical Academic Group (CAG) is a collaboration of clinicians, researchers, administrators, and consumers working to enhance the healthcare of older people.

Together we seek to implement research-informed healthcare for older people, whether in hospital, at the transitions of care, in residential aged care or in the community.

By bridging the gaps between healthcare professionals, academics, health services and the community, we aim to foster meaningful and practice-changing research that can be sustainably implemented in routine clinical practice.

The Growing Need for Geriatric Medicine

People over the age of 75 use one-third of all inpatient days in Australian hospitals, and as our population ages, that proportion is expected to grow.

The healthcare needs of older people are highly variable and often complex – and they are not always adequately met by a health system which is largely designed to treat one condition at time.

As older people become frail, healthcare is accessed across a wide range of subspecialties and settings. New thinking is required to meet the complex requirements of older people and provide them with personalised medicine and specialised care.

Geriatric evaluation and management is an optimal model of care for older people. Led by geriatricians, the model is built on multidisciplinary teams including medical, nursing and pharmacy staff, social workers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, speech pathologists, dieticians and many other allied health professionals.

The co-ordinated expertise of all these disciplines is essential to meet the needs of complex older patients.



Building Research Connections, Capacity and Capabilities

In response to the complex healthcare needs of older people, research into geriatric medicine is coming of age.

Our CAG supports the growing interest in geriatric medicine research and research translation amongst the diverse medical and health disciplines represented by Sydney Health Partners.

We bring together experience from clinicians and consumers across the healthcare spectrum, along with expertise in translational research including implementation science.

Together we are highlighting the importance of frailty assessment in routine care to guide patient management and ensure personalised treatment plans. This will support identification of vulnerable people to receive specialised care.

Our CAG leverages the size and reach of Sydney Health Partners (see below) to facilitate multi-site clinical research into the benefits of routine frailty assessment. In particular, our CAG collaborates with the ANZAC Research Institute, Centenary Institute, the George Institute for Global Health and Kolling Institute.

We mentor early and mid-career geriatric medicine researchers and by doing so, grow translational research capacity and capability.

And by using novel models of collaboration, we seek to improve the grant competitiveness and impact of geriatric medicine research across the Sydney Health Partnership.

The Sydney Health Partners

Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

Sydney Local Health District

Northern Sydney Local Health District

the children's hospital at Westmead

Western Sydney Local Health District

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

ADDRI Asbestos and Dust Diseases Research Institute

Chris O'Brien Lifehouse

Melanoma Institute Australia

ANZAC RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The George Institute for Global Health

The Westmead Institute FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

Centenary Institute life saving research Cancer, Inflammation, Cardiovascular

HRI HEART RESEARCH INSTITUTE

WOOLCOCK LEADERS IN BREATHING & SLEEP RESEARCH

CHILDREN'S MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE Jeans for Genes

KOLLING INSTITUTE Bridging Medical Research and Health

Our Geriatric Medicine CAG:

- Brings together clinicians, consumers, health services and researchers
- Geriatric medicine expertise across the healthcare spectrum including links between hospital care and primary health care
- Digital health, population health and implementation science expertise
- National and international clinical and research leadership/excellence
- Diversity of research networks – including national and international partners with similar health systems
- Access to state-of-the-art technology
- Collaboration and co-ordination between Local Health Districts



Our Leadership

The Geriatric Medicine CAG benefits from the leadership of clinician-researchers and academics who have national and international track records of research excellence. Leadership group members have leadership roles in their Local Health Districts, strong working relationships with the clinical leads for geriatric medicine, and the support of hospital and health district executives.

Our CAG leadership group also includes a consumer member and early and mid-career researchers. More than half of the leadership group are women, and we are from a diverse range of disciplines, backgrounds and cultures.



Professor Sarah Hilmer

Prof Sarah Hilmer (Chair)	Conjoint Professor of Geriatric Medicine	Royal North Shore Hospital, The University of Sydney, Kolling Institute
Prof Vasi Naganathan	Professor of Geriatric Medicine	Concord Hospital, The University of Sydney
Prof Richard Lindley	Professor of Geriatric Medicine	Blacktown Hospital, The University of Sydney
Prof Susan Kurrle	Professor of Geriatric Medicine	Hornsby Hospital, The University of Sydney
Prof Fiona Blyth	Professor of Public Health	The University of Sydney, School of Public Health
Prof Melissa Baysari	Professor of Human Factors	The University of Sydney, Digital Health
A/Prof Danijela Gnjidic	Dementia Leadership Fellow and Associate Professor	The University of Sydney, School of Pharmacy
Dr Lisa Kouladjian O'Donnell	Research Fellow, Geriatric Pharmacotherapy	The University of Sydney, Kolling Institute
Dr Janani Thillainadesan	Staff Specialist Geriatrician	Concord Hospital, The University of Sydney
Diana Trickett	Consumer Representative	Health Consumers New South Wales
Dr Mitchell Sarkies	Sydney Health Partners Implementation Science Representative	Sydney Health Partners, The University of Sydney
Dr Anita Sharma	Geriatrician, Head of Department	Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District
Dr Constance Vogler	Geriatrician, CAG Manager	The University of Sydney

Our Research Priorities

- Frailty measurement to inform health care
- Dementia/delirium in acute care and at transitions of care
- Scalable models for aged care outreach
- Person-centred models of care and shared decision making
- Continuity of care across transitions and settings
- Using implementation science to enable research translation





Our Project: Embedding Frailty Assessment

Frailty is a measure of a person's vulnerability to external stressors. As a result of research that has developed and validated frailty measurement, frailty is increasingly recognised as an important factor which can inform care and predict outcomes for older people.

The recognition of frailty is relevant across all clinical services, from acute geriatric medicine to oncology and cardiothoracic surgery.

When guided by the principles of multidisciplinary geriatric evaluation and management, screening for frailty enables clinicians to tailor the care of vulnerable older people and improve their health outcomes.

And by making the measurement of frailty to guide patient management routine, health service planning can be improved.

To date, however, the routine measurement of frailty has been limited by the ability of clinicians to find time for manual patient assessment.

In response to this challenge, members of the Geriatric Medicine CAG have developed a frailty index which can be extracted from information which is already routinely recorded in Electronic Medical Records (eMR).

While the frailty index has been successfully tested in one hospital, we aim to validate the index using data from any NSW Hospital with the eMR, based on the Comprehensive Care Risk Assessment Tool. Successfully doing so could enable recognition of frailty in real time in all inpatients.

Our CAG will then research how best to embed patient frailty assessment into routine care, in a way that is inclusive and applicable to all settings.

Pilot testing will aim to determine how the identification of frailty, and subsequent tailored management can lead to better clinical outcomes, better quality of life and cost-effective health interventions.

Future applications for larger grants will aim to investigate how the intervention can be successfully implemented, scaled-up and sustained across large and diverse health systems.

Our Next Steps

1. Organising events to bring diverse stakeholders together and foster informal knowledge exchange and collaboration
2. Matchmaking for research success - pairing early-to-mid career clinician-researchers with members of the CAG leadership and academic members of the CAG to build capacity and capability in geriatric medicine researchers
3. Establishing a network of research mentors, consumers, clinicians, health service leaders and other stakeholders who are approachable and easily accessible to geriatric medicine researchers
4. Engaging consumers including frail older adults and their caregivers in research - involving them in co-design activities and providing opportunities for consumer training in research participation





Our Long-Term Goals

- Engaging more clinicians in research activities
- Leveraging our network database to maximize research collaboration opportunities
- Creating specific research topic sub-groups
- Providing pilot grants and support to enable the initiation of new research projects
- Developing large, collaborative and multi-disciplinary grant applications
- Tapping into consumer research resources and insights to better understand and meet the needs of the target population
- Offering resource support in data connectivity and management to facilitate robust research
- Prioritising research that meets health service needs, and is translatable into clinical practice, ensuring its real-world applicability
- Securing adequate resources, both in terms of personnel and funding, to support the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based interventions in our health services
- Engaging with policymakers and politicians, including Health Ministers, to influence healthcare policies that impact older Australians.

Join Us

The Sydney Health Partners Geriatric Medicine CAG is seeking the contributions of all clinicians, clinician-researchers, academics, health administrators and executives.

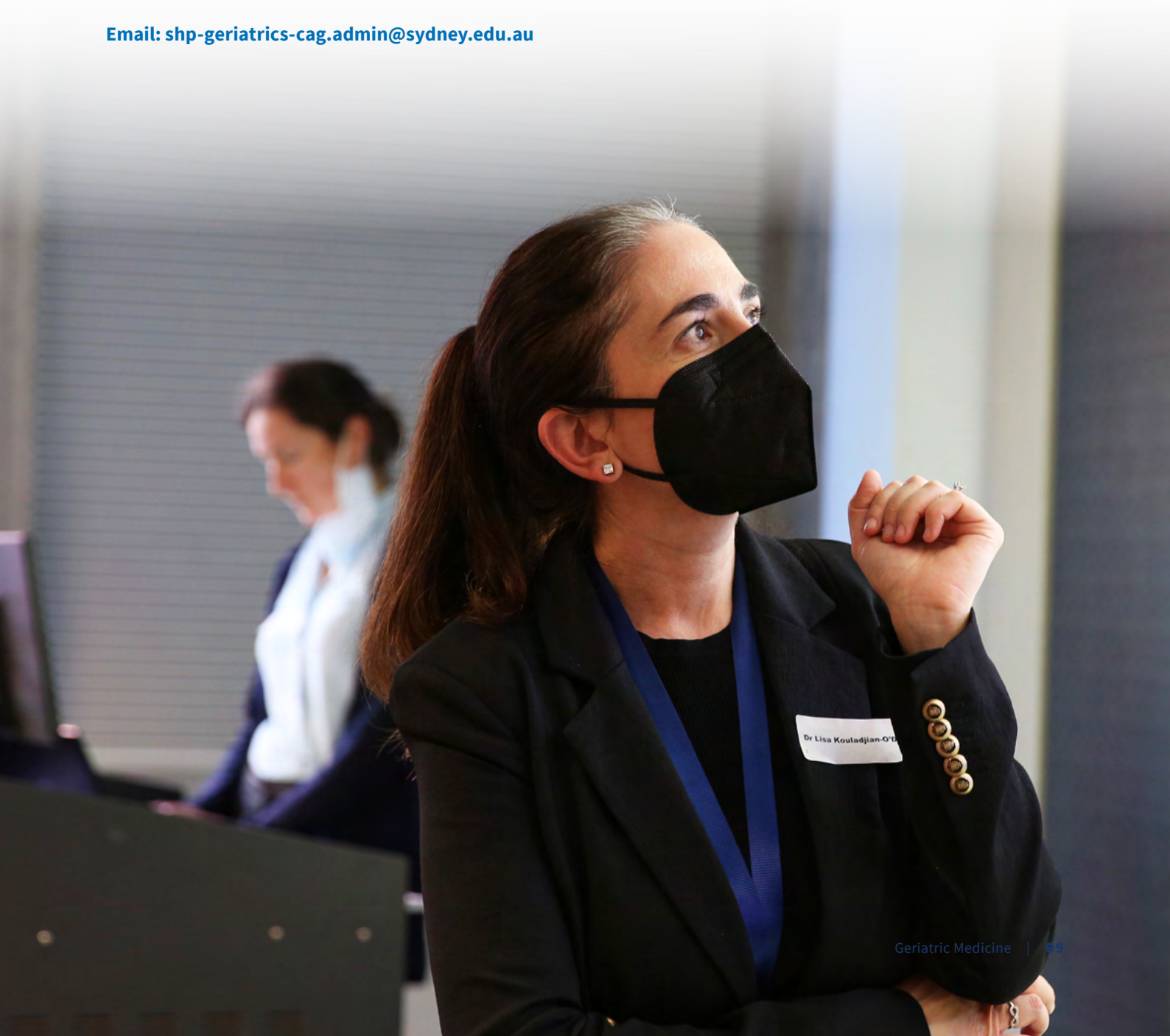
By breaking down the traditional silos of health and medical research, and collaborating between disciplines in new ways, we seek to meet the healthcare challenges of our growing population of older people.

Contact us now to express your interest. Together we can transform patient care and health outcomes for older Australians.

Email: shp-geriatrics-cag.admin@sydney.edu.au

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Sydney HealthPartners

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