

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS 2018

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

National Action on Overdiagnosis

The CREBP team at Bond has become a leader nationally and internationally in understanding and addressing the problem of overdiagnosis. Overdiagnosis happens when people receive medical diagnoses that may do them more harm than good. Along with work trying to understand the nature of the problem, and what's driving it, CREBP has initiated attempts to start taking action to address it and reduce the number of people being unnecessarily harmed. One of those initiatives has been to develop a national response, that involves organisations across the healthcare landscape.

In 2018, a CREBP team led a landmark paper published in the *Medical Journal of Australia (MJA)*, outlining the development of a national response to overdiagnosis. Lead author was CREBP Senior Research Fellow, Dr Ray Moynihan.



"The problem of overdiagnosis is part of the wider problem of too much medicine - which is essentially too much of a good thing," says Moynihan. "CREBP at Bond has developed an international reputation for trying to tackle this vexing challenge."

Driving the development of a national plan, a large group of influential stakeholders have signed a statement calling for action, including major medical colleges, leading consumer organisations and public bodies. In 2017 a summit of stakeholders was held, leading to the MJA article in 2018. Practical outcomes so far have included the development of accessible information for the public about overdiagnosis, freely available at the website of *Wiser Healthcare*, the research collaboration on overdiagnosis, funded by the National Health and Medical research Council. And importantly, Australia will host in December 2019 the 7th international Preventing Overdiagnosis scientific conference, a global initiative launched by the CREBP team in 2013, with partners including the BMJ.



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Dr Gina Cleo

Maintaining weight loss—a look at habits

The majority of individuals who lose weight through diet and exercise, will regain the weight. To seek an alternative to the short-term effects of lifestyle modification, researchers from Bond University's Centre for Research in Evidence-Based Practice (CREBP), conducted a randomized controlled trial in weight loss maintenance using non diet or exercise strategies, but rather, habit-change interventions.

The innovative study, entitled '*Habit-based interventions for weight loss maintenance in adults with overweight and obesity: a randomized controlled trial*' was published in the International Journal of Obesity and includes Senior Postdoctoral Fellow Gina Cleo, Associate Professors Rae Thomas and Elaine Beller, the Director of CREBP Professor Paul Glasziou and Professor Liz Isenring from Nutrition and Dietetics.

The findings showed that changing small daily habits resulted in weight loss and weight loss maintenance one-year after the interventions concluded. The novel outcomes of this trial caught media attention and was featured in over 130 media outlets nationally and internationally, reaching over 7 million viewers.

Dr Cleo says, "*Because our subconscious habits dictate so much of our daily behaviour, it's important to understand them, and more importantly, understand how to change them.*"

Professor Glasziou, says the study is a milestone in weight loss research.

As a result of the success of this trial and the growing interest in habits, Dr Cleo was awarded a \$100,000 Commonwealth Government Innovation Connections Grant to continue research in habit change for long-term weight management.

Evidence-Based Professorial Unit

Our Evidence-Based Professorial Unit based at Gold Coast Hospital supports active researchers, evidence-based practitioners and implementation projects.

As a lead partner with GCHHS, the QLD & Northern NSW Regional Health Collaborative was established to address the well-documented health challenges of those living in regional and remote Australia. An application to be an accredited Centre for Innovation in Regional Health is underway. The Collaborative comprises of seven health services, two primary health networks and six universities including their associated health research institutes and clinical schools.



Dr Paulina Stehlik

Tackling non-evidence-based treatments

To avoid being scammed by misleading health claims, we ran a public work-shop during Bond's Research Week aiming to provide participants with tools to quickly and effectively evaluate a health claim's merits, decide whether they need more information, and where to find it. Over 60 members of the public registered to attend the event, which gained significant media attention, with appearances on Seven News Gold Coast, the Gold Coast Bulletin "Coast MythBusters put fads, fallacies to test" and an interview on local morning radio, Hot Tomato. The event and online materials were cited again in the wake of the black slave saga in the Gold Coast Bulletin "Evidence is a Must when Seeking Treatment".



Associate Professor
Magnolia Cardona

Reducing low-value care in the last year of life

As medical technology and public health developments enable us to live longer, the proportions of those aged 70 years and above is growing, leading to a swelling and unsustainable demand for health services to manage the increased prevalence of irreversible age-related chronic illnesses. Unfortunately, sometimes aggressive treatments are administered to older people which will cause more suffering than benefit and prolong dying rather than improve the quality of end of life. CREBP's research program on end-of-life aims to create awareness among health professionals in Australia and overseas of the extent of non-beneficial treatments administered to older patients with multiple chronic conditions who are in their last months of life.