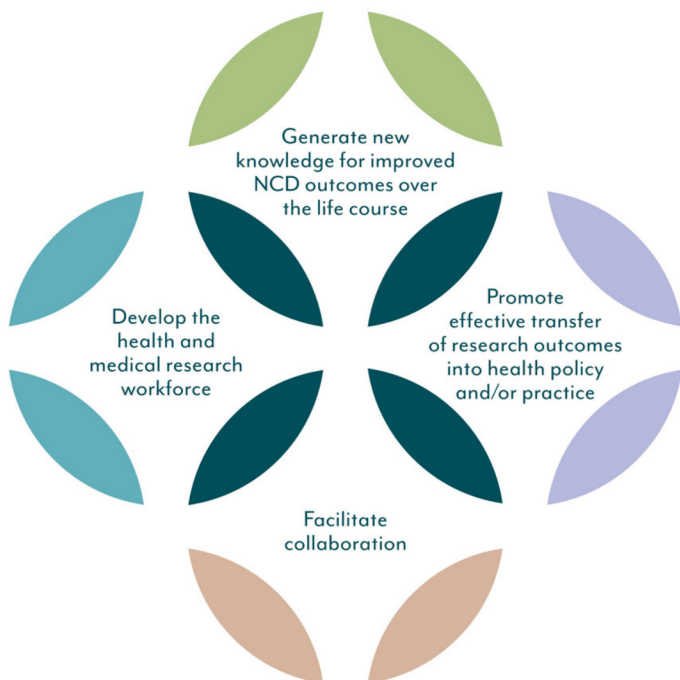


Outcomes Report 2019-2023

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are responsible for two-thirds of deaths among women. The Centre of Research Excellence on Women and Non-Communicable Diseases (CRE -WaND) aims to shift the focus of women's health beyond reproductive and sexual health to encompass and prioritise the prevention and detection of NCDs.

CRE-WaND utilises outstanding data resources and expertise to produce high-impact health outcomes, world-leading research capacity, and collaborative partnerships.



New Knowledge



232 publications
in peer-reviewed journals

Knowledge Transfer



1177 news stories by 492 unique outlets in 42 countries.



20 video resources focusing on menopause and joint pain with a further series on mental health in development.



Informed **10+ international guidelines** on early menopause and cardiovascular disease risk.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Jean Hailes for Women's Health – Research Translation partner



Collaboration for Enhanced Research Impact (CERI)

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre

Capacity Building



5 PhD students enrolled

New Knowledge

CRE WaND Research Synthesis Summaries

Health care delivery to those most in need

Australia's mixed public and private model of health care delivery means that medical care is often delivered inversely to need, with those most in need receiving the least or least effective care. To assess whether care reaches those in need, we looked at chlamydia testing in young people, dental care in women of different ages, and preventive health checks by general practitioners for women in mid-life. Across all of these research areas, our findings indicate that sufficient government reimbursement to cover the cost of health care may be an enabler for care being delivered to the right women. In contrast, where reimbursement levels are insufficient, inequities of access are evident.

Multicultural/diverse populations

This research theme focuses on non-communicable diseases in migrant women and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD), with particular emphasis on Gestational Diabetes Mellitus and menopause. Our research has identified issues relating to the accessibility and comprehensibility of health information to self-manage health and prevent NCDs later in life.

Our findings reveal significant barriers for women from CALD backgrounds, including 'shyness', having limited English language proficiency, and being unable to access health information because of poor health literacy. Conversely, the majority of primary health practitioners did not proactively offer menopause-related care and cited short appointments, lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, and lack of confidence in providing comprehensive menopause-related care to migrant women as barriers. Current formats of health information availability may inadvertently exclude these women, so the CRE WaND Translation Program has focused on developing a suite of video resources on NCDs.

Sex-specific risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD)

Knowledge gaps around the sex-specific risk factors for cardiovascular disease disadvantage women. Our research shows that women's reproductive histories influence their risk of CVD. Women who have experienced early puberty (menarche ≤ 11 years),

recurrent pregnancy loss, early natural or surgical menopause (<45 years), short reproductive lifespan, or severe vasomotor symptoms) are at an increased risk of CVD, including stroke, hypertension, and diabetes.

These results are already being incorporated into clinical practice guidelines and consensus statements providing clinical recommendations for premature menopause and CVD prevention in women and could be used to inform the incorporation of sex-specific risk factors into screening and prevention programs.

Preconception Health

Despite the importance of optimal preconception health for the health of the pregnancy and the baby, our review of international guidelines for pre-conception care (PCC) concluded that high-quality guidelines for pre-conception care (PCC) are lacking and that few recommendations are supported by high-quality evidence. To tackle this issue, multidisciplinary experts in PCC and social care were assembled to establish priorities and values for future PCC work in an Australian context.

Primary care providers do not routinely ask women about their pregnancy intention, citing lack of knowledge as a barrier. This issue is particularly important for women with NCDs who have significant unmet PCC needs. The One Key Question® (OKQ®) approach is a pregnancy desire screening question. Contrary to primary care professionals' beliefs, our research shows that asking people of reproductive age about their pregnancy intentions is acceptable to them. We evaluated a free online learning module designed to help nurses promote preconception health.

Mental Health

COVID-19: We utilised Australia-wide online surveys to show that COVID-19 pandemic restrictions extensively affected the mental health of Australian females and males. Females, however, had significantly higher rates of depression and anxiety symptoms than males because of their unpaid burden of caregiving. The uptake of telehealth mental health increased during the pandemic, and patterns of alcohol use increased for people with more severe symptoms of depression or anxiety.

Perinatal depression and anxiety: Women with high pre-pregnancy BMI appear to be at an increased risk of antenatal depression and anxiety, and women with a history of PMS are at an increased risk of developing PPD.

Workforce participation: Mental health among older women linked to workforce participation, social relations, general health, access to regular exercise and healthy nutrition. Not having a paid job significantly affects the mental health of both younger and older women 50 years and above.

Overdiagnosis and management of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM)

GDM is associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes; however, the widening of the diagnostic criteria in Australia (and other countries) has led to an increase in incidence, raising concerns about the overdiagnosis of this condition. GDM diagnosis increased in the United States, but this had no health benefits for either mother or baby, highlighting the need for a review of the current Australian Guidelines.

Overdiagnosis raises the possibility of potential harm for women, including life disruptions, psychological burdens, risk of more invasive forms of delivery, potential harms to the infant from restricted diets and the use of insulin, as well as increased costs and poor targeting of resources. Research exploring the impact of a GDM diagnosis on South Asian women indicated that the information available on ways to control GDM was culturally and socially inappropriate.

Obesity and musculoskeletal disease.

Obesity is a major modifiable risk factor for musculoskeletal conditions. Evidence suggests that obesity affects joints through loading and meta-inflammation. For those who are overweight, weight loss is a commonly recommended management strategy for osteoarthritis (OA). However, the evidence suggests that weight loss has a modest effect on knee pain, comparable to paracetamol, with a loss of 7.5% needed for a clinically significant effect. Despite the limited evidence, we found that practically all clinical guidelines recommend weight loss for knee and hip osteoarthritis. While most people with OA are aware that weight contributes to their OA, they also report having tried and failed to lose weight.

The continued focus on weight loss, which is difficult to achieve and maintain, may do unintended harm. Instead, we need to challenge commonly held beliefs about managing obesity. We estimate that about 28% of knee replacements per year at a cost saving of over 300 million dollars a year could be prevented by slowing the weight gain from age 18 to the mid-60s.

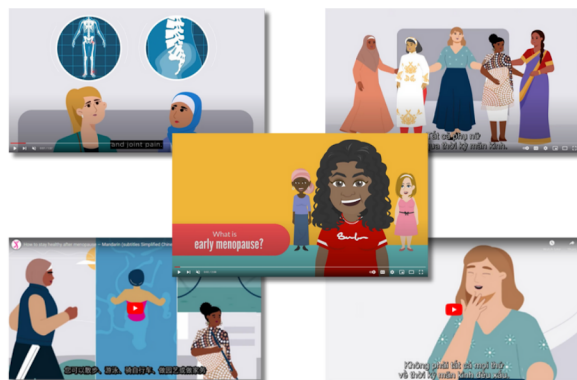
Visit www.wandcre.org.au to download the full research summary for each topic.

Knowledge Transfer

Health Literacy Videos

Our work with women from multicultural communities highlighted the need for health information targeting women with low health and English literacy. In collaboration with translation partner Jean Hailes for Women's Health, the CRE WaND Translation Program has developed a series of health literacy videos focused on menopause and joint health. A series of mental health videos is in production.

The first two videos to be disseminated by Jean Hailes, What is Menopause and How to Stay Healthy After Menopause, have each been viewed over 23,000 times. Chinese and Vietnamese translations of both videos have been viewed over 9,000 times each.



Visit www.wandcre.org.au to view CRE WaND's video resources

Recurrent pregnancy loss and stroke

The American Heart Association's Go Red For Women collection, a platform designed to increase women's heart health awareness, promoted CRE WaND findings on the links between recurrent pregnancy loss and stroke risk. This was accompanied by an article in The Conversation and an op-ed for Insight+, the MJA's free news service for GPs and other health professionals.

Tackling Obesity in Osteoarthritis

As part of translational work tackling obesity in osteoarthritis, CRE WaND's Professor Cicuttini led a meta-analysis questioning the recommendation that people should eat breakfast to manage obesity. Professor Cicuttini found no evidence that eating breakfast resulted in weight loss, and those eating breakfast ingested 260 extra calories/day. These findings achieved extensive coverage in the general population: covered in 158 news stories internationally; 3,991 tweeters shared this with a reach of > 11 million followers. The manuscript was in 'The Altmetric top 100 globally' (as the 50th most tracked scientific report globally of any field in 2019 (out of 2.7 million papers)).

Policy and Practice

Research from CRE WaND has informed the following policy and practice guidelines:

- Ten international clinical practice guidelines and consensus statements on early menopause and CVD findings
- The Lancet Commission for reducing the global burden of CVD in women by 2023
- The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (RCVMS)
- OECD Health Working Papers: Socio-economic and ethnic health inequalities in COVID-19 outcomes across OECD countries
- Rationel Farmakoterapi 3, 2022, Hormonbehandling i overgangsalderen (Hormonal Treatment During Menopause, Danish Health Authority)

Partnerships and Collaboration

National Women's Health Advisory Council

CRE WaND Director, Professor Gita Mishra, is a member of the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care National Women's Health Advisory Council. The council provides the government with advice and recommendations to improve health outcomes for women and girls in Australia.

James Lind Alliance

The James Lind Alliance is a national non-profit initiative established to bring together people with the lived experience of a condition and their healthcare providers as a priority-setting partnership (PSP).



The Menopause PSP (MAPS) has been established to identify research gaps and 'unanswered questions' on menopause, as identified by people with lived experience and professionals who care for them. CRE WaND's Professor Gita Mishra and Professor Martha Hickey sit on the MAPS Steering Committee. The PSP will identify and prioritise unanswered questions that research could address.

Centre for Enhanced Research Impact (CERI)

The Collaboration for Enhanced Research Impact (CERI) is a joint initiative between The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre and NHMRC Centres of Research Excellence (CREs) studying topics related to chronic disease prevention. As CERI members, we work together to find alignment in the policy and practice implications of our work and nurture the next generation of prevention leaders in Australia.

Jean Hailes for Women's Health

Jean Hailes for Women's Health is a national not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving women's health across Australia through every life stage. The organisation works in public health, research, clinical services and policy, producing practical and easy-to-understand information for women and health professionals. As the CRE WaND Translation Partner, they support CRE WaND's research translation efforts.

Research Team

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Partners



Better health for women
at every stage of life