

The Psychology Department provides clinical psychology and clinical neuropsychology services to patients of The Alfred.

Alfred Psychology is actively involved in providing research and evaluation as well as education and consultation to staff and community organisations. The department is strongly committed to the teaching and training of postgraduate students (provisional psychologists), and offers clinical placements to clinical psychology and clinical neuropsychology masters and doctoral students.

As part of Alfred Psychiatry, clinical psychology assessment and treatment services are provided to children, adolescents and adults. Within the acute hospital, clinical psychologists are involved in the assessment and treatment of patients who present with psychological problems such as depression, anxiety and adjustment issues. Clinical psychologists are attached to the Cystic Fibrosis, Oncology and HIV Services and the Hospital Admission Risk Program.

Current Projects

In conjunction with Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre, senior clinical psychologist Dr Neil Thomas is involved in a number of research projects on psychological models and therapies for schizophrenia-related disorders. These include a randomised controlled trial of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) for medication-resistant psychotic symptoms, an emergent therapy that has attracted substantial clinical interest. This trial will be the world's first trial of this therapy in chronic psychosis, and one of the most rigorously conducted trials of ACT internationally to date. Other projects include thinking processes involved in delusions, perceptual processing in auditory hallucinations, psychosis following traumatic brain injury, therapeutic processes and mechanisms of change in psychological therapies for psychosis, and peer-facilitated interventions for people with psychosis.



Kathleen Troup, Senior Clinical Psychologist.

Monash University Psychology Honours student, Brindha Pillay, investigated the psychosocial impact of haematopoietic stem cell transplantation on relative donors. The aim of the study was to explore the psychosocial impact of stem cell donation before, during and after donation, and to gain insight into donors' experience of the preparation for, and procedures associated, with donation. Participants included 13 men and nine women, with a mean age of 53.1 years, who donated stem cells or bone marrow to a relative between 2007 and 2010 at The Alfred. The results revealed that a broad range of positive and negative emotions are experienced at different time points during the donation process, with the psychosocial impact of donation influenced by factors such as the pragmatic aspects of the donation process, family dynamics, perceived adequacy of preparation and emotional support, and uncertainty related to health outcomes for the recipient and donor. The implications of the results will be used to improve the provision of psychosocial services for donors. This was a joint project between the Psychology Department, Patient and Family Services, Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre and Cabrini Monash Psycho-oncology Research Unit.

Senior Clinical Psychologist, Kathleen Troup, led a project involving the implementation and evaluation of dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) in an Australian community mental health setting for people with Borderline Personality Disorder. Data were collected for 20 clients over seven years at pre-treatment, mid-treatment and post-treatment. Clients were assessed using a range of self-report measures. Utilisation of Inpatient, Emergency Department, and Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team services for two years before and after treatment was also obtained. Significant improvements were found from pre- to mid-treatment, and from pre- to post-treatment in trait anxiety, affective control, quality of life and coping. Significant improvement in depression was found after two rounds of DBT skills training modules. Additionally, utilisation of crisis services decreased significantly after two rounds of skills modules.

Neuropsychologist Dr Rubina Alptsis studies cognitive outcomes in hepatitis C patients, investigating of the effects of the virus on cerebral function, specifically cognition and P300. She also participates in an NHMRC-funded study into the cognitive outcomes of deep brain stimulation surgery for older patients with Parkinson's disease.

Dr Maxine Braithwaite, Senior Clinical Psychologist, works on improving adherence to treatment in cystic fibrosis patients. A randomised control trial with the intervention of direct pharmacy dispensing, and motivational interviewing is in progress.

Dr Michelle Earle, Senior Clinical Psychologist, investigates sexual compulsivity, sexual sensation seeking and global mental health in men who have sex with men presenting to the Psychology Clinic within the Victorian HIV Service.

Postgraduate Students

2 Doctor of Psychology Students
3 Masters Students

Publications

2 Journal Articles