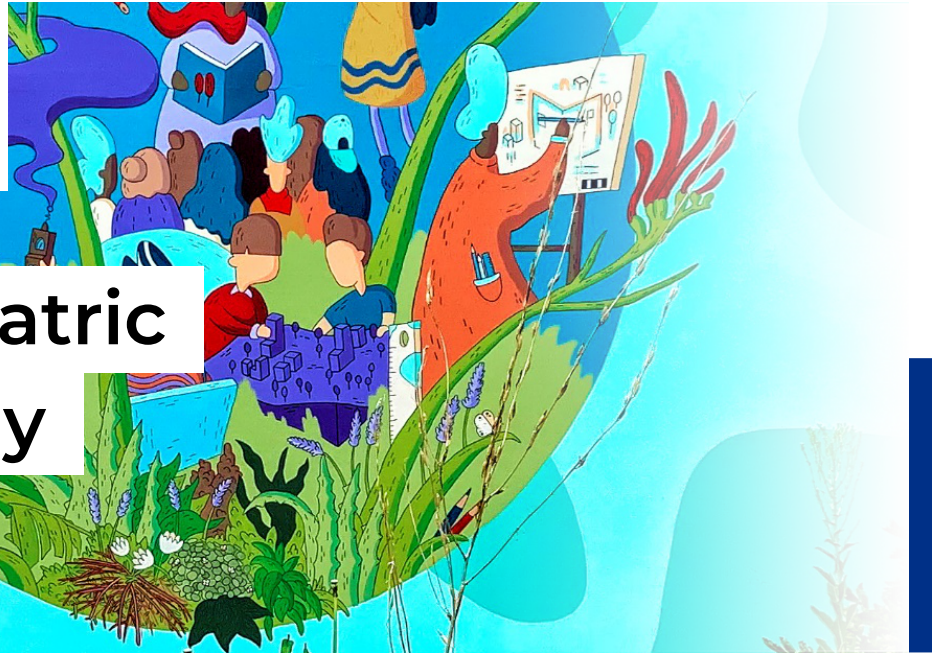




THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**



Neuropsychiatric Epidemiology Research Unit

Who are we?

The Neuropsychiatric Epidemiology Research Unit was established in 2008 by Emerita Professor Vera Morgan. The unit is recognised for its expertise in psychiatric epidemiology, and its cross-disciplinary approach to the study of severe mental illness (SMI) including schizophrenia.

Our Research

1. Our work focuses on COURSE and CAUSE in SMI.
 - Why is the physical health of people with SMI so poor, and morbidity rates so high, compared to the general population?
 - What factors can change the course of physical and mental illness?
 - What does recovery look like for people with a SMI?
 - What are the risk factors for SMI across the developmental life course?
 - What specific roles do obstetric complications and childhood adversity play?
2. We take a cross-disciplinary approach, combining epidemiological, psychiatric, physical health, criminological and sociological perspectives.
3. We utilise face-to-face clinical interviews with participants and linked administrative health and social services databases.

Current Research

The benefits of belly dance to improve mental health and wellbeing

Few studies have explored Belly Dance as a tool to improve mental health and wellbeing. This pilot study aims to assess the short-term benefits on mental health and wellbeing from participating in four weeks of Belly Dance classes.

Risk prediction of cardiovascular disease (CVD)

The most commonly used risk prediction algorithms for CVD outcomes have been developed on older, general population samples and do not take account of factors specific to people with SMI. This work aims to provide recommendations on the best approaches to estimate 5-year CVD risk for people SMI.

Weight Trajectory

Weight gain presents a substantial problem for people with SMI, with three quarters being overweight/obese. Crucially, a 5-10 per cent reduction in weight has a positive impact on risk factors for CVD. This work aims to better understand the factors contributing to weight loss separately for men and women.

Fifteen-year outcomes and predictors of recovery

Longitudinal data allows changes in health outcomes to be tracked, but no Australian studies have collected extensive longitudinal data from people with SMI.

WA participants first interviewed in 2010 will be contacted and interviewed for a third time. These data will be used to inform models of care delivery to improve mental and physical health outcomes of people with SMI.

Instruments and Training

We offer training in use of the:

- **Diagnostic Interview for Psychosis.** A semi-structured clinical interview and software to classify psychotic illness according to ICD-10 and DSM criteria. This is translated into 13 languages
- **Scales for use with register data** Obstetric Complications Scale
Early Adversity Scale for Schizophrenia
- **Courses** Conducting research with people with SMI. This online course is designed to assist researchers and aims to give them an understanding of their roles and responsibilities including determining and obtaining informed consent and recruiting and interviewing people with SMI.

Available at: retprogram.org





Dr Anna Waterreus

Research Associate Professor
DipNursingStudies GradDipClinEpid PhD

- Head of NERU
- Nurse/Clinical epidemiologist

Research focus: physical health, impact of cannabis use, longitudinal outcomes for people with psychotic disorders.

Contact phone: 0439 902 518
Email: anna.waterreus@uwa.edu.au



Dr Giulietta Valuri

Research Assistant Professor
BBus GradDipEpi PhD

- Forensic epidemiologist
- Expertise in database design, programing, data management

Research focus: forensic psychiatry, criminology, linked health databases.

Contact phone: 0409 889 205
Email: giulietta.valuri@uwa.edu.au



Ms Patsy Di Prinzio

Research Fellow
BAppSci BSc(Hons) MBiostat

- Biostatistician

Research focus: adversity as a risk factor for severe mental illness, mortality, cardiovascular risk prediction.

Contact phone: 6488 5950
Email: patsy.diprinzio@uwa.edu.au



Tammy Hall

Research Fellow
BPsych(Hons) MPsych(Clin)

- Clinical Psychology Registrar

Research focus: barriers to COVID-19 vaccination, qualitative research, improving well-being for people with psychosis.

Contact phone: 6488 7809
Email: tammy.hall@uwa.edu.au



Susie Hincks

Research partner with lived experience of mental illness

- Co-Founder, Meeting for Minds

Research Interests: research involving people with lived experience of mental illness.



Emerita Prof Vera Morgan

BA GradDipEd MSocSc PhD

- Psychiatric epidemiologist

Research focus: risk factor epidemiology in severe mental illness, social determinants of outcome.

Email: vera.morgan@uwa.edu.au

Recent Publications

- Discontinuing cannabis use: Symptomatic and functional outcomes in people with an established psychotic disorder. *Schizophr Res.* 2023; 254:118-24
- Hospital inpatient admissions of children of mothers with severe mental illness: A Western Australian cohort study. *Aust N Z J Psychiatry.* 2023; 57:528-36
- Development and initial validation of a multivariable predictive Early Adversity Scale for Schizophrenia (EAS-Sz) using register data to quantify environmental risk for adult schizophrenia diagnosis after childhood exposure to adversity. *Psychol Med.* 2023;53:4990-5000
- Secondary mental health service utilisation following emergency department contact for suicidal behaviour: A systematic review. *Aust N Z J Psychiatry.* 2023; 57:1208-22.
- Mapping genomic loci implicates genes and synaptic biology in schizophrenia. *Nature.* 2022; 604: 502-8.



Information is accurate as at October 2024

GET IN TOUCH

CALL US

+61 8 6159 6438
Monday -
Thursday

EMAIL US

anna.waterreus
@uwa.edu.au

POSTAL ADDRESS

School of Population & Global Health
University of Western Australia M431 35
Stirling Highway, Crawley, WA 6009

VISIT US

School of Population & Global
Health Corner Clifton St and
Stirling Hwy , Nedlands

