



Project Title: Cognitive behavioural tHerapy for AMD PatientsS (CHAMPS)		Code: WIMR1
Host School / Institute: Westmead Institute for Medical Research		Address: Centre for Vision Research, Westmead Institute for Medical Research, 176 Hawkesbury Rd Westmead, NSW
Certificates & Clearances required: No		
Primary Supervisor: A/Prof Bamini Gopinath		
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Co-Supervisor/team: The Centre for Vision Research (CViSR), Westmead Institute for Medical Research, University of Sydney, will take a lead role in the proposed Summer Research Scholarship project and will operate as the administrative headquarters. A/Profs Gopinath and Liew and an expert team of epidemiologists, clinicians and statisticians are located at the centre.		
Project Type: Qualitative Analysis; Survey; Clinical		
Project Category: Mental Health; Public Health		
Skills / Attributes of a successful student: This project will suit a student who has a keen interest in ophthalmology and/or psychology. Qualitative research skills would be welcomed but not essential. The student will be trained in all aspects of qualitative data collection. The successful student should have enthusiasm and excellent communication skills, both oral and written communication skills. They also require attention to detail to assist with transcribing patient interviews.		
Project Keywords: Age-related macular degeneration ; Depression ; Anxiety; Interviews; Qualitative research		
<p>Project Description: Background and Aims: Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in older Australians. The most common negative consequence of the vision loss caused by AMD is increased functional disability, which puts AMD patients at increased risk for mental health problems such as high levels of clinical depression and anxiety. In the absence of a medical cure for AMD, self-management and psychological interventions are likely to mitigate the negative impacts of AMD on the daily lives of older adults and would be vital to managing this condition. Our study aims to address a potentially preventable consequence of AMD, by designing and evaluating an evidence-based psychological intervention i.e. cognitive behavioural therapy, tailored to patients with AMD.</p> <p>Study approach: The proposed Summer Scholarship Research project will involve the critical first step of intervention development - a qualitative study. This will involve the student assisting our project coordinator to conduct semi-structured interviews with 20 AMD patients recruited from a private eye clinic in Westmead. Specifically, patients will be asked to give a general overview of their experiences with AMD, low vision and mental health. They will then be asked to broadly describe their preferences and concerns for a mental wellbeing program tailored to older patients with AMD. Patients will subsequently be asked for suggestions as to the format of the intervention and who should deliver the program; open-ended questioning will be used to allow participants to expand on their thoughts. The student will be involved with the interviews being recorded and transcribed verbatim; and will help with checking it against the audio recording for accuracy.</p> <p>Significance: The findings from this project will help us to better understand the needs of AMD patients; including the barriers and facilitators to engagement with an intervention that addresses depression and/or anxiety in these patients. Project findings will have the potential to increase trust and acceptability of AMD patients; and improve recruitment and retention for a future trial of the cognitive behavioural therapy intervention in mid-2020. By meaningfully involving AMD patients in planning and developing a psychological program, the proposed project has potential to empower patients with AMD by enhancing their coping strategies as well as hopeful feelings; and thereby, improve their mental wellbeing and quality of life.</p>		