



NDARC awarded \$4.5 million in grants for mental illness, substance use, smoking, illicit drug use and alcohol research

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- Professor Maree Teesson (Centres of Research Excellence) PRevention & Early intervention in Mental Illness and Substance use (PREMISE CRE). \$2,495,968.
- Professor Louisa Degenhardt (Research Fellowships) Increasing knowledge about substance use and harms, and interventions to prevent and reduce harm. \$849,540.
- Dr Ryan Courtney (Career Development Fellowships) Reducing the social gradient in tobacco smoking rates: The road less travelled; Novel and innovative paths for improved cessation rates and outcomes. \$431,000.
- Dr Sarah Larney (Career Development Fellowships) Increasing global and national knowledge about illicit drug use, harms and effective interventions. \$431,000.
- Ms Claire Wilkinson (Early Career Fellowships (Australia)) Preventing alcohol related-harms: using comparative policy analysis to study the effects and development of local government alcohol policy. \$318,768.

The National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) at UNSW has won more than \$4.5 million in national health and medical research grants for five projects spanning a range of topics.

The latest funding round announced by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) includes \$2.5 million for a new Centre of Research Excellence, the PRevention & Early intervention in Mental Illness and Substance use (PREMISE CRE).

The Centre will be led by NDARC's Professor Maree Teesson and UNSW Scientia Professor Helen Christensen, Director of the Black Dog Institute. Other partners include Orygen, Newcastle, Deakin, Macquarie and Sydney universities.

Substance use and mental disorders are the leading global causes of burden of disease in young people, conservatively costing the Australian community more than \$40 billion each year, according to Professor Teesson.

"We need to build the evidence base and research capacity in this important area," she says.

Other NDARC successes in the latest NHMRC funding round include:

Professor Louisa Degenhardt has been awarded \$849,540 for three programs of work involving highly collaborative research with international consortia.

1. Epidemiology of substance use and mental health, and contribution to the burden of disease.
2. Pharmaceutical opioids, the impact of opioid dependence, and treatments to reduce harm.

3. Risk and resilience in young people.

Dr Ryan Courtney has been awarded \$431,000 to test new and innovative cost-effective treatments to improve smoking cessation rates. Tobacco smoking remains a preventable cause of morbidity and mortality, and strengthening efforts to reduce smoking among populations with high prevalence, e.g. low-socioeconomic status (low-SES) groups, is a national health priority. Research findings will inform health practice and policy, and assist Australian and international decision makers to make informed evidence-based decisions on new treatments with the potential to increase cessation rates.

Dr Sarah Larney has been awarded \$431,000 to increase global and national knowledge about drug use and related harms, and interventions to prevent harm and improve public health. This project will create new knowledge that will be used by UN and international agencies, and national governments, to monitor changes in drug use and harms, and guide policy and planning for drug treatment and harm reduction services.

Ms Claire Wilkinson has been awarded \$318,768 to conduct the first systematic examination of the impact of local government regulation of alcohol availability. Regulating the availability of alcohol is one of the most effective ways to reduce harm from alcohol consumption, and local governments have a significant role. The findings can inform Australian planning and licensing policies to help support appropriate regulation of alcohol outlets in order to reduce alcohol-related harm.

A full list of grant recipients is available on the [NHMRC website](#).

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PREMISE CRE:

Through the PREMISE CRE, UNSW and the Black Dog Institute will forge new links with Newcastle (Associate Professor Frances Kay-Lambkin), Orygen Melbourne (Professor Patrick McGorry), Deakin (Associate Professor Cathy Mihalopoulos), and Sydney (Associate Professor Andrew Baillie) universities.

UNSW chief investigators: Associate Professors Nicola Newton, Kath Mills, Tim Slade and Cath Chapman.