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Website Update

This year has seen the commencement of a major project to update the CHeReL website. The aim is to make the website more informative and easier to navigate, and be able to be fully maintained by the CHeReL.

The CHeReL thanks all the researchers, community members and staff who have assisted the process by putting forward their ideas for improvements.

The process is long but please keep checking for the new site at www.cherel.org.au.

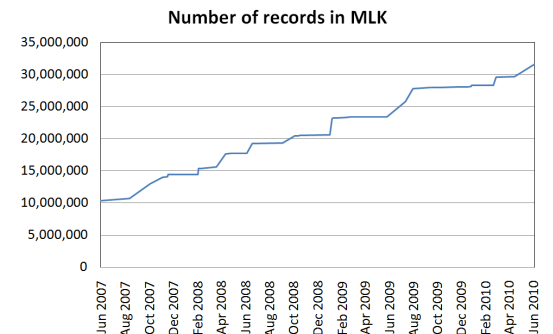
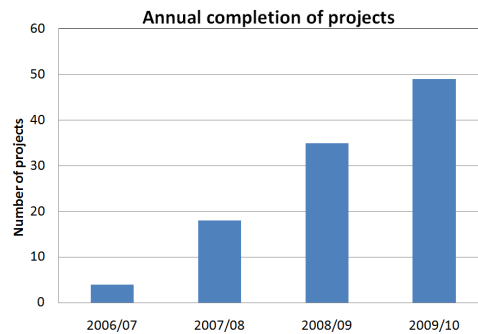
What's New

Since its inception in 2006, the number of projects completed by the CHeReL has steadily increased—from 4 in 2006/07 to 45 in 2009/10.

Master Linkage Key

The Master Linkage Key (MLK) has grown from just over 10 million records in June 2007 to over 30 million records in June 2010. These records contain demographic information, such as name and address, and 'pointers' to the original records on databases held by organisations outside the CHeReL. The MLK now contains information on over 7 million people.

The MLK has pointers to records from: the NSW Admitted Patients Data Collection; NSW Emergency Department Data Collection; NSW Midwives Data Collection; NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages birth and death registration data; NSW Central Cancer Registry; the 45 and Up Study; and the ACT Central Cancer Registry. Further information on the MLK can be found on the CHeReL website.



New governance arrangements

The CHeReL has introduced a new funding model and this is reflected in changes in our governance arrangements. We now have an Executive Committee comprising of representatives from the NSW Department of Health and the Cancer Institute NSW as owners of the CHeReL, and an Advisory Committee comprising of representatives from ACT Health, the University of Sydney, the University of New South Wales and the University of Western Sydney, as well as members of the Executive Committee. The Community Advisory Committee continues to be our principal interface with the general community.

It's not just about research

The Pap Test Register and BreastScreen NSW have databases that are used to mail reminders to women who have overdue tests, and both use the services of CHeReL to keep their databases up to date.

Community Advisory Committee

We welcome Dr Jan Herbert and Ms Sandra Everett as new members of the Community Advisory Committee. Professor Tony Adams and Dr Terry Beed have stepped down from the Committee and we would like to express our deep gratitude for their wonderful support during the establishment of the CHeReL. Mr Tom Kelly has kindly agreed to Chair the Committee. It is with sadness that we heard of the passing of Ms Helen Briggs and we wish to acknowledge her valuable contribution to the Committee.

Recently published studies

Title: Hospital-related morbidity in people notified with hepatitis C: A population-based record linkage study in New South Wales, Australia.
(Journal of Hepatology 2010, 53:43–49)

First Author: Heather Gidding, University of NSW

Summary: This study investigated morbidity in the early stages of hepatitis C (HCV) infection. All notifications of HCV in NSW from 1992 to 2006 were linked to hospital records, death records, and HIV and hepatitis B notifications. Cases co-infected with HIV or hepatitis B were excluded. Rates of hospitalisation were calculated and compared to those expected for the NSW population as a whole.

Rates of hospitalisation among those with HCV infection were 42% higher than expected overall and significantly raised in the 15–64 year age group. Lifestyle factors accounted for the highest rates of hospitalisation in young adults while liver disease contributed the greatest burden in older adults. Illicit drug-related conditions accounted for 9% of hospital admissions while alcohol and liver-related conditions each accounted for 5%.

The findings from this study highlight the need for strategies to minimise lifestyle-related harms, including alcohol consumption, and to improve HCV treatment uptake in order to reduce morbidity in people with HCV infection.

Title: Home and community care services: a major opportunity for preventive health care.
(BMC Geriatrics 2010, 10:26)

First Author: Louisa Jorm, University of Western Sydney

Summary: The Home and Community Care (HACC) program provides services in the community to frail elderly people living at home and their carers. However surprisingly little is known about the health of people who use these services. This study sought to describe health-related factors associated with use of HACC services.

Information on over 100,000 men and women from the 45 and Up Study were linked to the HACC dataset containing information about service use. HACC clients and non-clients were compared according to a range of variables from the 45 and Up Study questionnaire.

The results revealed that socio-demographic vulnerability (in particular, low income and not having a partner) and health needs are strong predictors of HACC service use. Modifiable lifestyle risk factors and preventable health conditions (including underweight, obesity and falls), were also shown to occur at a much higher rate among HACC clients than other individuals.

These findings have implications for policy and service development, demonstrating the potential benefits for implementing preventive health care programs in the HACC service setting.

Linkages completed in 2010

To date, over 40 projects have been completed in 2010. Two recently completed linkage projects are described below:

Title: An injury profile for rear seat vehicle occupants using linked health and crash data.

Principal Investigator: Dr Julie Brown, Neuroscience Research Australia

Summary: While strategies and regulations to reduce road injuries and fatalities have led to greater protection for passengers positioned in the front seat of vehicles, there appears to be little improvement for rear seat occupants. Furthermore, despite estimates that rear seat passengers account for around 30% of injuries and fatalities, little is known about their pattern of injuries and outcomes. The present study aims to address this in a study linking records from the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority with hospital records over the period 2005 to 2008. This linked dataset will allow the researchers to quantify and describe the injury profile for rear seat occupants and identify which occupants and injury types are the highest priority for injury design countermeasures such as rear seat safety standards and assessment protocols.

Title: Novel and established risk factors for cardiovascular and metabolic disease: 45 and Up Study Data Linkage Project

Principal Investigator: Professor John Chalmers, The George Institute

Summary: Cardiovascular disease remains the biggest killer of adult Australians and a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. This study aims to address issues such as risk factors, health outcomes and health services use in relation to cardiovascular disease. Records from the 45 and Up Study were linked to a number of administrative datasets: the NSW Admitted Patient Data Collection, NSW Cancer Registry, NSW Emergency Department Data Collection and mortality data from the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The study will investigate a range of novel and established risk factors for cardiovascular disease outcomes. These include demographic, lifestyle and health-related factors, with the initial focus on factors relating to physical activity and inactivity, obesity, overweight and nutrition, erectile dysfunction and sleep.