



Clinical trials

Innovative care closer to home

grampianshealth.org.au

Proven expertise in clinical trials

Clinical research is fundamental to enhancing healthcare at Grampians Health, where our focus is firmly on effective patient care and improved health outcomes for our community.

With well-established partnerships across industry and specialist research organisations, we are the largest clinical research organisation in western Victoria.

We are very proud of the strong relationships and internal systems we have built over the past 20 years which now sees Grampians Health home to renowned and respected trial teams that have undertaken more than 150 trials in a range of disciplines.

We've run over
150 clinical trials
offering advanced
treatment options
and hope to our
community.

Current trial disciplines



Anaesthetics



Cardiology



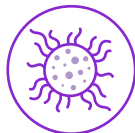
Endocrinology



Gastroenterology



Haematology



Infectious Diseases



Intensive Care



Medical Oncology



Neurology



Obstetrics & Gynaecology



Paediatrics



Surgery



- ✓ More than 100 clinical trials currently open
- ✓ Over 50 years of combined study coordinator experience
- ✓ 30 principal investigators
- ✓ Dedicated facilities and services
- ✓ Currently undertaking Phase IB, II, III, IV

Grampians Health: A trusted and progressive leader of regional and rural healthcare

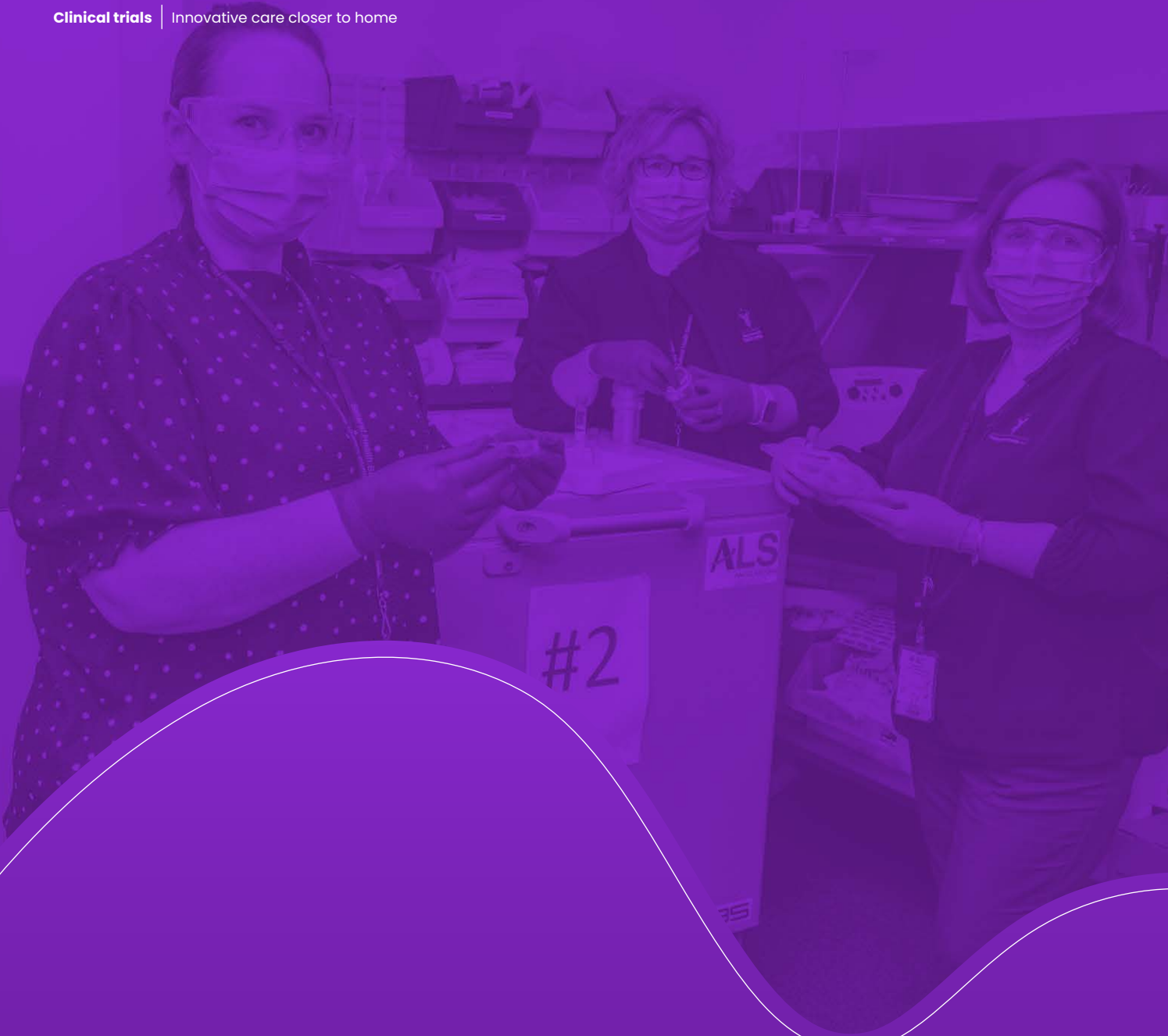
Established in 2021, Grampians Health brings together Ballarat Health Services, Wimmera Health Care Group, Stawell Regional Health, and Edenhope & District Memorial Hospital.

Grampians Health Ballarat has the largest clinical trials unit in western Victoria, and the health service is the primary referral hospital for the Grampians region – which stretches from the western edge of Melbourne to the South Australian border.

Many communities in our region experience socio-economic disadvantage, and are more likely to suffer ill-health, particularly chronic disease.



The region covers around 48,500m² and is home to over 250,000 people or 17% of regional Victoria's population.



Facts about Grampians Health (2022)



57,395

Patient Admissions



75,000+

Presentations to
Emergency Department



133,850+

Specialist Outpatients
appointments



12,095

Elective Surgery Episodes



6,800+

Staff



700+

Beds



Lymphoma

Dr Geoffrey Chong

Medical Oncologist Dr Geoffrey Chong is the local site principal investigator for a chemotherapy-free trial for follicular non-Hodgkin lymphoma at Grampians Health.

The latest clinical trial will look at a novel combination of immunotherapy drugs as initial therapy for follicular lymphoma patients.

“

The aim of this study is to determine whether this combination is effective and safe. We have promising data from previous trials that immunotherapy can work in this disease.

If successful, hopefully we can develop effective chemotherapy-free treatments for this disease.

”



Cardiology

A/Prof Ernesto Oqueli

Grampians Health has several cardiology studies open, with the most recent looking at treatments for atrial fibrillation (AF), which is a risk factor for stroke.

Associate Professor Ernesto Oqueli, Head of Cardiology, is leading their latest clinical trial to investigate a new medication to reduce the risk of stroke in patients with AF.

A/Prof Oqueli says that the ultimate outcome for this study is the prevention of stroke and systemic embolism in patients with atrial fibrillation.

“

This multi-center, international, phase III study will give regional Victorian patients access to high quality research and medical care, while providing important data for current and future patients with AF at risk of stroke.

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Intensive Care Medicine

Dr Khaled El-Khawas

Intensive Care Unit Dr Khaled El-Khawas' latest research is seeing him partner with Austin Health to run a clinical trial using magnesium to determine the best way to treat patients admitted to the ICU who may experience atrial fibrillation (AF).

Dr El-Khawas says that having access to less invasive ways of treating AF could not only improve patient outcomes, but also make prevention the heart of the treatment.

“

We hope to identify whether two different methods of supplementing magnesium in the ICU prevents or shortens the incidence of AF, and subsequently identify whether one approach achieves improved clinical outcomes.

”



Phase I Clinical Trials

Dr Lizzie Lim

Grampians Health is currently the only regional Victorian centre running phase I oncology clinical trials for patients, under the care of Medical Oncologist Dr Lizzie Lim and her colleagues.

Dr Lim has been working at the forefront of cancer treatment and research for over seven years. Her passion for ground-breaking research to help her patients is evident, while currently overseeing several open trials.

"Phase I clinical trials are evidence-based, gold-standard in progressing research to improve the outcome of patients. Without them, we can't have any progress and I believe they should be the standard of care for patients," Dr Lim said.

While not all new drugs will work against cancers, being able to test new medications and see their responses helps researchers with their quest to find new ways to tackle cancer treatment.

“

What I enjoy is being at the forefront of oncology drug development and helping contribute to research that can help patients now and in the future.

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Haematology

Ms Maggie Zhang

A registered nurse for more than 10 years, Clinical Trial Coordinator Maggie Zhang is working to improve the overall survival rate of patients diagnosed with diffuse large B cell lymphoma (DLBCL).

Ms Zhang says new treatments she is working on may be more effective for some patients with DLBCL and is hopeful it will provide an alternative treatment in the future.

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There are several early stage trials for patients with DLBCL in the first line treatment setting, but none of these trials to date have led to practice-changing results and therefore the current chemotherapy treatment remains the standard first-line therapy for DLBCL. This study aims to improve the response rate and overall survival for first-line treatment in DLBCL.

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Lung Cancer

Dr Wasek Faisal

Medical Oncologist Dr Wasek Faisal is the Clinical Lead for thoracic tumors at Grampians Health. With over 11 years' experience in oncology, he has been a principal investigator at Grampians Health for over six years.

With over 50 clinical trials to his name, Dr Faisal is hoping to change the outcome for many lung cancer patients.

"As a sub-investigator, I have been involved in clinical trials across most solid-tumor streams, and as a Principal Investigator, lung cancer trials. I have been involved in well over 50 trials, of which more than 20 have been in a principal investigator capacity."

Clinical trials are a vital part of medicine, with researchers finding novel and innovative ways to tackle cancers, immune disorders, and other illnesses.

“ Trials are important because it gives access to cutting edge treatment options to your patients, and keeps you at the forefront of scientific advancement. It is also the only way that patients can potentially access tomorrow's treatment today, that is not otherwise available. ”



Stroke

A/Prof Ramesh Sahathevan

Neurologist and Associate Professor Ramesh Sahathevan is hoping to bring about a major shift in how strokes are treated.

This particular study will test new anticoagulant medication in people who have suffered an acute non-cardioembolic ischemic stroke or high-risk transient ischaemic attack (TIA).

A/Prof Sahathevan is excited by what this trial will mean for both patients and medical professionals.

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For our patients it hopefully means better outcome and recovery. For medical practitioners it means we have more medications to treat patients. The great thing about this trial is that it will result in a major shift in how we treat ischemic stroke.

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Haematology

Dr Swe Htet

Haematology Lead Swe Htet and team are contributing real life data of newly diagnosed myeloma patients to the Myeloma and Related Diseases Registry. In addition, the myeloma 1000 project aims to establish a repository of samples for future patient assessment to better predict individuals at risk of developing multiple myeloma or a related disease, accelerated disease progression, and treatment response.

“

We want to get real-life data on myeloma treatment in Australia. We're hoping to contribute to the myeloma database in Australia and compare regional centre performance with metro centres.

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Connecting trials and patients

Ms Carmel Goss

Grampians Health's Clinical Trials Manager Carmel Goss is proud of the continuing development of the clinical trials unit in regional Victoria.

The clinical trials unit was established in 2002, opening its first trial in gastroenterology. The clinical trials team has now grown in capacity and in 2023 celebrates running over 150 trials.

"It's a fantastic achievement and speaks volumes about our team and their willingness to be at the forefront of medical research, while doing so in a regional setting," Ms Goss said.

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We're changing lives every day. The dedication to research, to making medicine better and more effective for patients now and into the future is fantastic to be part of.

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Trial Participant

Mr Christopher Duncan

Christopher Duncan was a fit, healthy man in his late 50s when he was unexpectedly diagnosed with bowel cancer in 2011. His prognosis was two to three years.

In September 2011, while recovering from a knee replacement, a routine blood test showed some abnormalities. Follow up tests confirmed Mr Duncan had cancer.

In twelve years, Mr Duncan has undergone a lengthy surgery and many rounds of chemotherapy and radiotherapy. In 2013, he participated in the VENGEANCE trial at Grampians Health, a chemotherapy treatment targeting the metastatic tumours throughout his liver.

Mr Duncan was on the trial for over three years. When he first started the trial, the average lifespan was 18 to 24 months. Ten years later, Mr Duncan is still here and participating in experimental treatments for his cancer.

“

This trial gave me another opportunity at life. I'm still trying to live my best quality of life as possible. It's also helping another lot of patients coming after me.

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Grampians Health Research
PO Box 577, Ballarat VIC 3353
ResearchEthics@gh.org.au

For more information visit:
grampianshealth.org.au