

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WA MENTAL HEALTH COVID-19 RESEARCH
PANEL, HELD VIA ZOOM ON 13 OCTOBER 2020**

ZOOM Link:

<https://uwa.zoom.us/j/559040219?pwd=bJqenFtTEJNNlhNcmRGejVqNVY0dz09>

Or use this link to the same room:

<http://rebrand.ly/wamhcorp>

PRESENT:

Professor Sean Hood (The University of Western Australia) Chair
A/Professor Dorit Maor (Murdoch University)
Professor Jo Badcock (The University of Western Australia)
Professor Romola Bucks (The University of Western Australia)
A/Professor Wendy Cumming-Potvin (Murdoch University)
Dr Evenda Dench (The University of Western Australia)
A/Professor Joanne Dickson (Edith Cowen University)
Dr Ali Fardinpour (Wise Realities)
Professor Peter McEvoy (Curtin University)
Dr Helen McGowan (WA Mental Health Network)
Professor Anna Waterreus (The University of Western Australia)

Executive Officer (Leanne Hall)

APOLOGIES:

A/Professor Caroline Mansfield (Notre Dame University)
Professor Vera Morgan (The University of Western Australia)
Dr Elizabeth Newnham (Curtin University)
Dr Michelle Olaithe (The University of Western Australia)

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and introduced Dr Helen McGowan from the Mental Health Commission.

2 DIRECTORY OF MEASURES (MCEVOY)

Nil

3 WORKGROUP UPDATES

a. CIVIC

Need to confirm with Dr Affandi and Professor Reid the current response numbers, and whether baseline responses are still being collected.

b. Digital Telehealth

Nil

c. Workforce

Professor McEvoy reported that he has been finalising measures around suicide risk and loneliness, and will follow-up with Dr Affandi with regards to ethics approval progress.

4. PROJECT UPDATES

Professor Hood advised that he has received funding from JTSI towards a project surveying COVID impacts on the health workforce.

Professor Waterreus mentioned a recently conducted clinical audit of mental health staff in the community (South Fremantle) around the change in service delivery and impact of COVID-19 safety measures.

A/Professor Cumming-Potvin mentioned that they have received a small WAIER grant and the project has been granted ethical clearance. Will be commencing recruitment shortly.

Dr Fardinpour informed the group that due to COVID-19 they are now working solely on providing free virtual reality mental wellness programs to vulnerable communities. If any members would like to be involved, or access the programs, please contact Dr Fardinpour directly.

5. MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION PLANNING FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Dr McGowan advised members that the Mental Health Commission is undergoing consultation to develop a young people priority framework. The Western Australian Government has identified that young people have been disproportionately affected during COVID, and are developing strategy to respond. They are considering a range of themes including, availability and accessibility of services, stigma, discrimination, age-appropriate provision and so forth.

If any members would like to provide further information regarding current mental health research initiatives, especially those related to Youth and COVID-19, please contact Dr McGowan at helen.mcgowan@health.wa.gov.au. There is also a particular interest in the knowledge and skills of "1st responders" (teachers, GPs ED staff ambulance, police, sports coaches etc) in responding to young people with mental health issues, how to identify risk and escalate/access more specialised care when required.

Future Health Research and Innovation Fund grant
<https://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/McGowan/2020/09/COVID-focus-for-Future-Health-Research-and-Innovation-Fund-grant.aspx#:~:text=The%20FHRI%20Focus%20Grants%3A%20COVID,relevant%20to%20the%20COVID%20emergency>

6. NEW BUSINESS

Professor Hood advised members that the WAHTN COVID-19 Research Group has decided to disband in the short-term. In light of this, how would this group like to proceed in terms of future meetings?

There was agreement that the group is a useful forum and members would like to continue to meet. Suggestion that more invited guests would be useful, and Professor Hood encourage members to think of who to invite. Will also continue with updates on the surveys as they progress.

NEXT MEETING

TBA