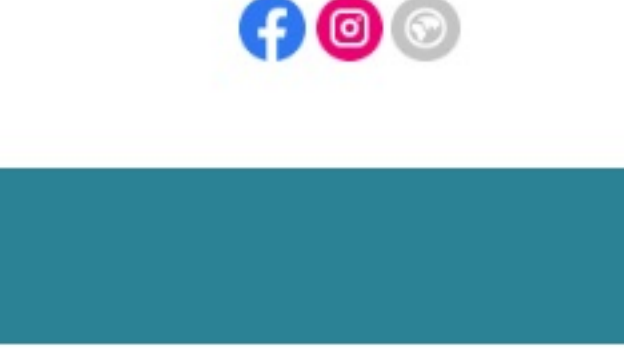
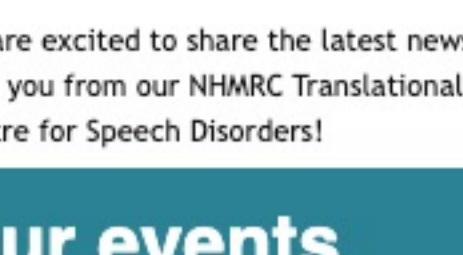


No images? [Click here](#)



Newsletter

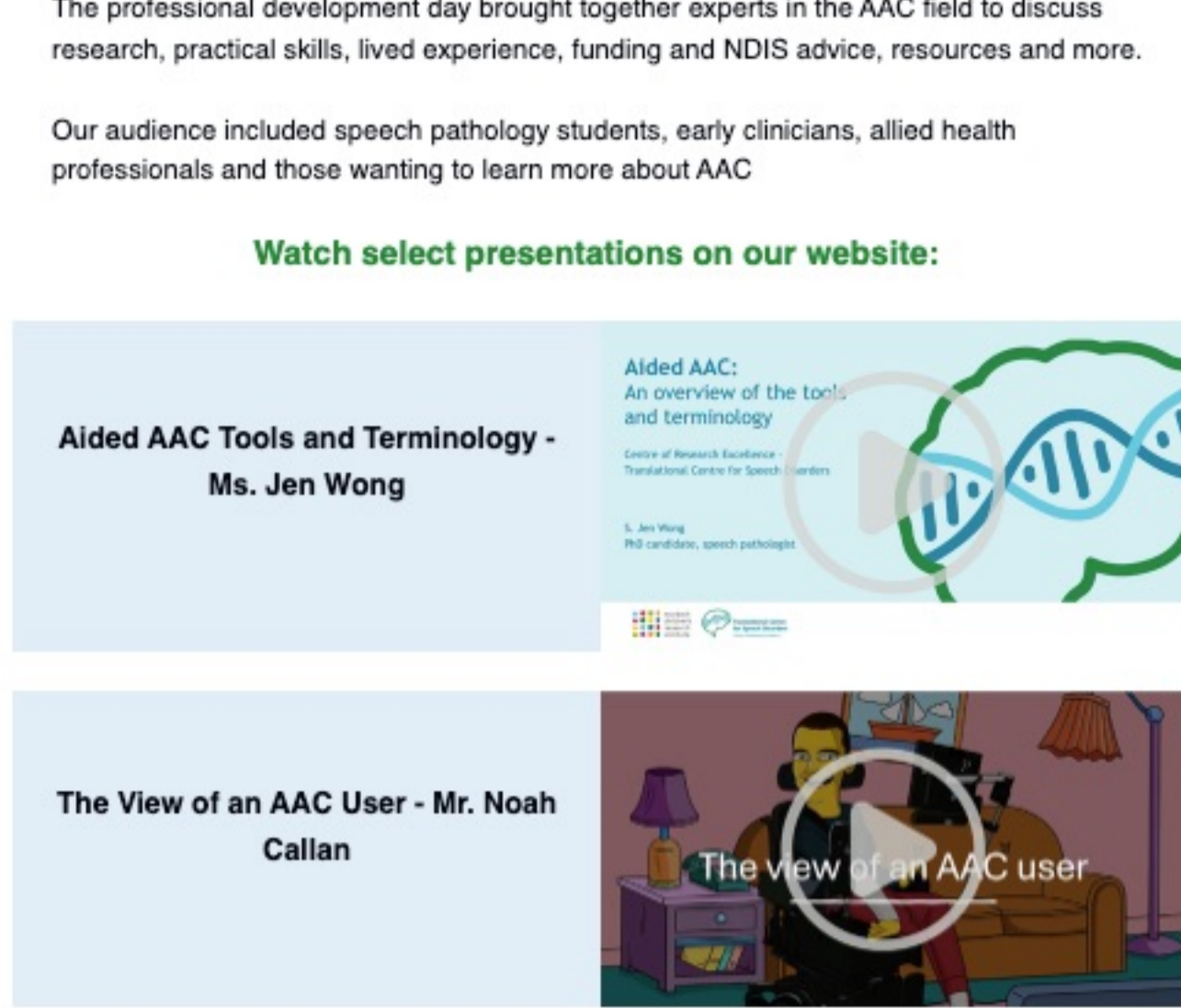
We are excited to share the latest news with you from our NHMRC Translational Centre for Speech Disorders!



Our events

We hosted a professional development day!

Aided AAC: Applications in Clinical Practice



The speech and language team within the CRE were very pleased to host the Aided Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC): Applications in Clinical Practice symposium on Friday 10th October at the Ella Latham Auditorium (The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH), Melbourne).

The professional development day brought together experts in the AAC field to discuss research, practical skills, lived experience, funding and NDIS advice, resources and more.

Our audience included speech pathology students, early clinicians, allied health professionals and those wanting to learn more about AAC

Watch select presentations on our website:

Aided AAC Tools and Terminology - Ms. Jen Wong

Aided AAC: An overview of the tools and terminology
Centre of Research Excellence
Translational Centre for Speech Disorders
Jen Wong
PhD candidate, speech pathology

The View of an AAC User - Mr. Noah Callan

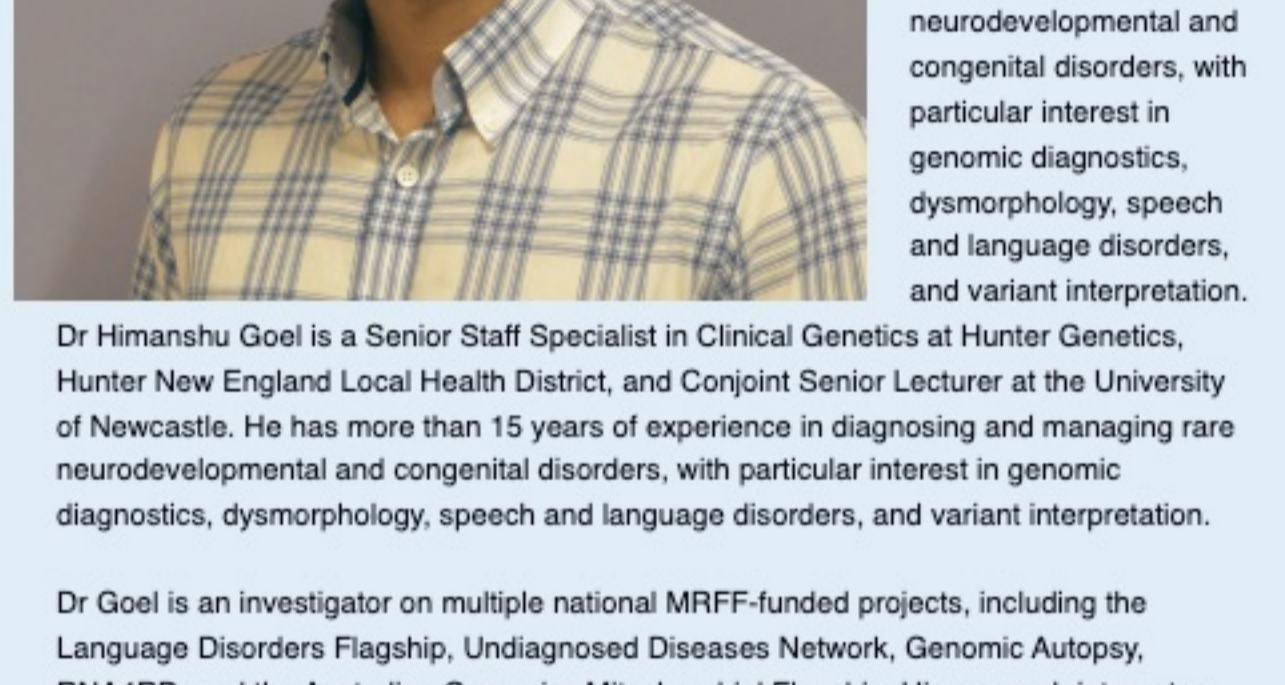
The view of an AAC user

AGOSCI & Resources - Ms. Jenna O'Brien

AGOSCI
Jenna O'Brien, speech pathologist
AGOSCI Victoria State Representative

Phenotyping can inform AAC decisions - Ms. Lottie Morison

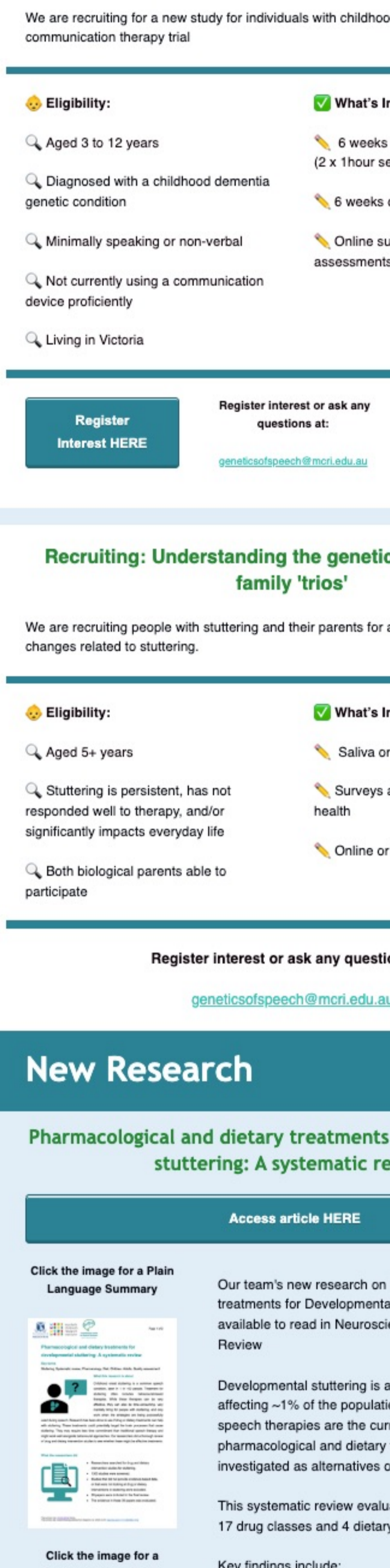
Phenotyping can inform AAC decision making
Centre of Research Excellence - Translational Centre for Speech Disorders
Lottie Morison
PhD candidate, speech pathology



Investigator Profile Feature

We are pleased to share a featured profile each newsletter so more can be learned about our CRE team members

Dr Himanshu Goel



Dr Himanshu Goel is a Senior Staff Specialist in Clinical Genetics at Hunter Genetics, Hunter New England Local Health District, and Conjoint Senior Lecturer at the University of Newcastle. He has more than 15 years of experience in diagnosing and managing rare neurodevelopmental and congenital disorders, with particular interest in genomic diagnostics, dysmorphology, speech and language disorders, and variant interpretation.

Dr Goel is an investigator on multiple national MRFF-funded projects, including the Language Disorders Flagship, Undiagnosed Diseases Network, Genomic Autopsies, RNA4RD, and the Australian Genomics Mitochondrial Flagship. His research integrates genomic sequencing, epigenetics, and deep phenotyping to improve diagnostic yield and characterise emerging neurogenetic syndromes.

He has authored over 100 peer-reviewed publications. His work frequently intersects with the genomics of severe childhood speech disorders, supporting evidence-based pathways for genetic testing in motor speech disorders. Dr Goel also contributes to international gene-specific curation groups, guideline development for KBG syndrome, and editorial roles in medical genomics and paediatrics.

New Studies Recruiting

Recruiting: High-tech augmentative and alternative communication for childhood dementia

We are recruiting for a new study for individuals with childhood dementia to participate in a communication therapy trial

- Eligibility:**
 - Aged 3 to 12 years
 - Diagnosed with a childhood dementia genetic condition
 - Minimally speaking or non-verbal
 - Not currently using a communication device proficiently
 - Living in Victoria
- What's Involved:**
 - 6 weeks of speech therapy sessions (2 x 1 hour sessions per week)
 - 6 weeks of usual care
 - Online surveys and in person assessments to measure progress

Register Interest HERE

Register interest or ask any questions at:
geneticsofspeech@mcri.edu.au

Recruiting: Understanding the genetics of stuttering in family 'trios'

We are recruiting people with stuttering and their parents for a new study looking at gene changes related to stuttering.

- Eligibility:**
 - Aged 5+ years
 - Stuttering is persistent, has not responded well to therapy, and/or significantly impacts everyday life
 - Both biological parents able to participate
- What's Involved:**
 - Saliva or blood sample
 - Surveys about speech, language, and health
 - Online or in-person meeting

Register interest or ask any questions at:
geneticsofspeech@mcri.edu.au

New Research

Pharmacological and dietary treatments for developmental stuttering: A systematic review

Access article HERE

Click the image for a Plain Language Summary



Our team's new research on Pharmacological and Dietary treatments for Developmental Stuttering is now freely available to read in Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Review

Developmental stuttering is a speech fluency disorder affecting ~1% of the population. While behavioural speech therapies are the current gold standard, pharmacological and dietary treatments are increasingly investigated as alternatives or adjuncts.

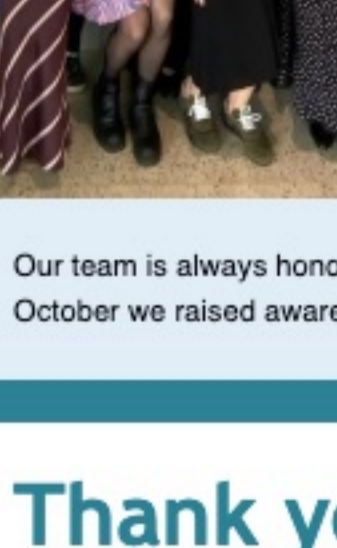
This systematic review evaluated 39 studies examining 17 drug classes and 4 dietary treatments for stuttering.

Key findings include:

- Dietary supplements were not effective treatments for stuttering
- More high-quality research is needed before we can draw firm conclusions about drug interventions
- Behavioural therapies with speech therapists remain the gold standard, backed by the strongest evidence.

Our website also has a Plain Language Summary of the study and a Fact Sheet about stuttering freely available to download.

Click the image for a Stuttering Fact Sheet



Combining genetic and behavioral predictors of 11-year language outcome

Access article HERE

1. What this research is about

About 1 in 10 children has a language disorder. It's hard to identify these children when they are young. This makes it hard to give them the support they need.

2. What the researchers did

We calculated a measure that represents part of an individual's genetic risk of having lower language skills. We combined this genetic measure with parent survey questions to see how well they predicted individuals' language at 11 years.

3. What the researchers found



We repeated the results across 2 groups. In both groups, the survey questions could predict about three quarters of children with low language at 11 years. See the dark bars ("Survey only") in this graph. Our genetic measures did not improve how well we could predict individuals' later language very much. The numbers in the light bars ("Survey and genetics") are not that much higher than the dark bars.

4. What this means

Genetics can't help yet with identifying most young children with language disorders. The best ways are still to ask parents questions, or for a clinician to observe the child.

New paper by our team (Gasparini and colleagues) published in Psychiatry Research combined a genetic measure with parent survey questions to see how well they predicted individuals' language at 11 years.

The genetic measure did not reliably improve predictive accuracy. This study helps us understand that the best ways to identify most young children with language disorder are still to ask parents questions, or for a clinician to observe the child.

Schinzel-Giedion syndrome: communication, feeding and motor skills in 16 individuals

Access article HERE

CRE PhD student and speech pathologist Lottie Morison is the first author of this research which aimed to understand communication, feeding and motor skills in Schinzel Gideon syndrome.

Key findings:

- Most people with Schinzel-Giedion syndrome have communication skills that are similar to children less than 3 months old.
- Some people with Schinzel-Giedion syndrome cry and make happy sounds.
- Some people with Schinzel-Giedion syndrome can respond to things around them, like hearing their name and waving.
- Several parents of people with Schinzel-Giedion syndrome report a loss of skills overtime

This study improves our understanding of what therapies and supports might be helpful for people with Schinzel-Gideon syndrome. Communication interventions should include communication partner training and environment adaptations.

Thank you to the individuals with Schinzel-Giedion syndrome and their families for generously taking part in the research.

Click the image for a Plain Language Summary

Click the image for a SGS Fact Sheet

Research coming soon...

Speech pathologist resource development - Think Genetic!

The CRE's implementation science team are using the data from Marianna Lauretta's (CRE genetic counsellor and speech pathologist) Masters research, built on by Dr Tharu Anandam early this year to generate a theoretically and empirically informed resource for speech pathologists. The aim of the resource is to support speech pathologists identify children who's complex speech disorder may be genetic, guide them through a referral to genetic services, and help support families after testing.

The team will develop a draft early in 2026 and look to run some workshops with speech pathologists to alpha test the resource.

Thank you to everyone who has participated in this work to date!

Awareness days

Our team is always honoured to raise awareness for conditions that we study. This October we raised awareness for PURA syndrome and stuttering

Thank you!

Our team wishes to thank families and clinicians for their ongoing participation and support. Without your help our research would not be possible.

Centre of Research Excellence - Translational Centre for Speech Disorders

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