As many of you will be aware, the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) Centre for Clinical Research Excellence (CCRE) in Aphasia Rehabilitation ran in Australia from 2009-2014. The CCRE Aphasia had as its foundations research, capacity building, and community engagement. It aimed to investigate the principles of neuroplasticity as they apply to aphasia rehabilitation and translate best research evidence into best practice for Australians living with aphasia. The CCRE Aphasia experienced great success, creating a spirit of collaboration and sparking a renewed passion for aphasia research.

Not to rest on their laurels, the Australian aphasia research community have continued to work towards the CCRE Aphasia's goal of creating better pathways to living successfully with aphasia. Such work includes the generation of new high level evidence for aphasia interventions.

Currently, four national clinical trials in aphasia rehabilitation are underway across Australia: Aphasia LIFT, VERSE, The ASK Study, and COMPARE. In this edition of our newsletter, we will provide an overview of each of these trials and illustrate how these trials are working together to improve the lives of people with aphasia.
OVERVIEW OF APHASIA CLINICAL TRIALS IN AUSTRALIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPARE</th>
<th>La Trobe University, VIC</th>
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<td>NSW:</td>
<td>Royal Rehab, St Joseph's Hospital</td>
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<td>QLD:</td>
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<td>TAS:</td>
<td>Tasmanian Health – South</td>
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<td>WA:</td>
<td>Osborne Park Healthcare Group</td>
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<tr>
<th>VERSE</th>
<th>Edith Cowan University, WA</th>
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<td>NSW:</td>
<td>Albury Wodonga Health Service, Concord Hospital, Prince of Wales Hospital, Royal North Shore Hospital, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Concord Hospital, St George Public Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>QLD:</td>
<td>Cairns Base Hospital, Gold Coast University Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIC:</td>
<td>Alfred Health, Austin Health, Melbourne Health, St Vincent’s Health</td>
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<td>WA:</td>
<td>Fremantle Hospital, Joondalup Hospital and Health Service, Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital</td>
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<th>ASK</th>
<th>The University of Queensland, QLD</th>
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<tr>
<td>NSW:</td>
<td>Bathurst Base Hospital, John Hunter Hospital, Manly Hospital, Mona Vale Hospital, Orange Base Hospital, Royal North Shore Hospital, Ryde Hospital, St Vincent’s Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>QLD:</td>
<td>Hervey Bay Hospital, Rockhampton Hospital, Toowoomba Hospital</td>
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<td>TAS:</td>
<td>Royal Hobart Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIC:</td>
<td>Peninsula Health, Goulburn Valley Health, Latrobe Regional Hospital, Monash Health, Barwon Health, Northern Health, Western Health</td>
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<td>WA:</td>
<td>Bunbury Hospital</td>
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<th>LIFT</th>
<th>The University of Queensland, QLD</th>
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<tr>
<td>QLD:</td>
<td>Gold Coast University Hospital, Ipswich Hospital, Logan Hospital, Mater Adults Hospital, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, The Prince Charles Hospital, St Andrew’s War Memorial Hospital, The Wesley Hospital, Metro North Community Based Rehabilitation Team</td>
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</tbody>
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**STAR PERFORMING HOSPITALS / HEALTH NETWORKS**

- ★★★ Gold Coast University Hospital (COMPARE, LIFT & VERSE)
- ★★ Monash Health (ASK & COMPARE)
- ★★ Peninsula Health (ASK & COMPARE)
- ★★ Royal North Shore Hospital (ASK & VERSE)
- ★★ Sir Charles Gardiner, Osborne Park Health Care Group (COMPARE & VERSE)
- ★★ St Vincent’s Health, Sydney (ASK & COMPARE)
OVERVIEW OF APHASIA CLINICAL TRIALS IN AUSTRALIA

VERSE
The VERSE study is a speech and language rehabilitation trial which targets those who have had a stroke and are having difficulty with their speech and language (aphasia). Research has suggested that having language therapy is important in the recovery of aphasia.

This study is aimed at finding out whether regular and structured speech therapy is more effective and cost saving than current standard speech therapy.

VERSE needs to recruit 246 participants in total (82 in each of the 3 arms of the trial: Usual Care, Usual Care Plus, and VERSE).

ASK
The overarching aim of the ASK study is to decrease the incidence of depressive symptoms for people with aphasia and their caregivers.

The specific aims are to determine whether a tailored, early intervention program (Aphasia ASK) leads to better mood and overall quality of life outcomes than an attention control (a secondary stroke prevention intervention) at 12 months post-stroke in both patients with aphasia and their caregivers.

COMPARE
COMPARE is a research study which compares the outcomes of different treatments for people with aphasia.

The study will determine if two intensive and contrasting treatments – multi-modal aphasia therapy and constraint induced aphasia therapy – result in better outcomes compared to the usual care aphasia treatments.

The study will define which individuals respond best to M-MAT and CIAT, based on the severity of aphasia and cognitive/linguistic profiles.

LIFT
Operating in south-east Queensland only, Aphasia LIFT seeks to integrate all aspects of what people with aphasia and their families want with evidence-based components into an intensive, comprehensive “package”. LIFT incorporates impairment-based therapy, functional therapy, computer therapy, and group sessions.

Aphasia LIFT will be compared to usual care in language impairment, functional communication, and communication-related quality of life outcomes in individuals with aphasia.
AUSTRALIAN APHASIA CLINICAL TRIALISTS AT THE STROKE 2015 CONFERENCE

Australian Aphasia Clinical Trialists were well represented at recent Stroke 2015 Conference in Melbourne. Together, the Chief Investigators on each of the current aphasia clinical trials running in Australia presented a symposium entitled *Aphasia Rehabilitation Research: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Developing Evidence Base*. Esteemed colleague Professor Marian Brady, from Glasgow Caledonian University, joined them on the panel.

(L-R): Associate Professor Erin Godecke, Associate Professor Miranda Rose, Professor Marian Brady, and Professor Linda Worrall at the Stroke 2015 Conference, Melbourne
AUSTRALIAN APHASIA CLINICAL TRIALISTS STAFF PROFILES – THE TRIAL MANAGERS

EACH NEWSLETTER, WE WILL INTRODUCE YOU TO SOME OF THE STAFF WORKING ON THE AUSTRALIAN APHASIA CLINICAL TRIALS. IN THIS NEWSLETTER, MEET THE TRIAL MANAGERS

RENEE ALLAN
LIFT CLINICAL TRIAL MANAGER
THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND (QLD)

Renee has been with The University of Queensland and the LIFT project since the original grant application. She has a clinical speech pathology background in New Zealand and Australia, and is the principal person ‘on the ground’ for the trial. Renee will soon be joined by Jade Dignam, who will be joining the LIFT team to support Renee following the submission of her doctoral thesis.

MARCELLA CARRAGHER
ASK CLINICAL TRIAL MANAGER
THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND (QLD) – BASED IN VICTORIA

Marcella is currently the Trial Manager for the ASK study until Brooke Ryan returns in June 2016. Previously, Marcella worked for a number of years as a speech pathologist in the North West of England across acute, subacute, rehab and community settings. She completed her PhD at the University of Manchester (England) in 2012 supervised by Professor Karen Sage and Dr. Paul Conroy. Marcella’s research interests include quality of life for people living with long-term aphasia and designing therapies for people with aphasia that promote generalisation to everyday communication.
FIONA ELLERY
VERSE CLINICAL TRIAL MANAGER
CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE TRIALS AUSTRALIA (VIC) – BASED IN VICTORIA

Fiona moved into the area of research early in her nursing career as a clinical trials study coordinator. She has had many years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry having worked for a pharmaceutical companies and contract research organisations as a research consultant. Fiona joined Neuroscience Trials Australia in 2006 where her primary role is to assist investigators initiating research studies in areas such as protocol development, management and ongoing monitoring of clinical trials. She is the trial manager for the AVERT study and the VERSE study and has worked with both projects from their inception.

ABBY FOSTER
COMPARE ASSISTANT CLINICAL TRIAL MANAGER
LA TROBE UNIVERSITY (VIC)

Abby graduated from La Trobe University with a Bachelor of Speech Pathology (Hons) in 2004, and since this time has worked predominantly in acute stroke units. Abby is currently completing her doctoral research through The University of Queensland. She has worked on a number of Aphasia Lab projects, including those exploring gesture in aphasic discourse, community aphasia groups, and the pilot CIAT/M-MAT project. Abby’s research and clinical interests lie in the acute management of post-stroke aphasia, knowledge translation, and evidence-based practice.

MELANIE HURLEY
COMPARE CLINICAL TRIAL MANAGER
LA TROBE UNIVERSITY (VIC)

An experienced Clinical Project Manager within the healthcare sector with over 15 years’ research, management and mentoring experience in pharmaceutical, device and therapy development. Melanie has been involved in a number of large and small research projects across multiple therapeutic areas. She has extensive experience managing all aspects of clinical research, including ethics: private and government based funding agencies, project management, site management, training, recruitment, protocol development and data management.
CURRENTLY RECRUITING

The ASK study

We are inviting expressions of interest from health services to help us with the delivery of a NHMRC project titled:

“Can a brief early mood intervention help people live with aphasia a year after stroke?”

Investigators:

Professor Linda Worrall  
The University of Queensland

Professor Ian Kneebone  
University of Western Sydney

Professor Ilina Simmons-Mackie  
Honorary Professor – The University of Queensland

Dr Asad Khan  
The University of Queensland

Dr Kyla Hudson  
The University of Queensland

Associate Professor Tammy Hoffman  
Bond University

Dr Emma Power  
The University of Sydney

Professor Leanne Togher  
The University of Sydney

Dr Miranda Rose  
LaTrobe University

Dr Brooke Ryan  
The University of Queensland

What is this study about?
The study aims to determine whether a tailored, psychosocial intervention ( Aphasia ASK) leads to better patient outcomes than an attention control (a secondary stroke prevention intervention). Speech pathologists will provide an intervention to people with aphasia.

What is the study design?
We are conducting a cluster randomised trial. Entire health districts will be randomised to one intervention type. The interventions contain content related to either a) psychosocial strategies for living with aphasia or b) secondary stroke prevention. Participant workbooks have been developed to guide each module. The workbooks contain structured learning content, discussion items, practical exercises, and additional independent learning/reflection activities.

Site payment
Hospital sites will be reimbursed at $1000 per person with aphasia involved in the project, provided payment for the training of speech pathologists, and provided all study intervention resources.

Contact information
Please contact Marcella Carragher m.carragher@latrobe.edu.au to express your interest as an intervention site.
Clinical trial:

Constraint Induced or Multi-Modal aphasia rehabilitation (COMPARE): An RCT for stroke related chronic aphasia
La Trobe University Human Ethics Committee Application 15-043

What is the trial about?
The trial will compare two intensive treatments for individuals living with chronic post-stroke aphasia: multi-modal aphasia treatment (M-MAT) and constraint induced aphasia therapy (CIAT). These two intensive treatments will be compared to non-standardised limited aphasia therapy (usual care).

What are the aims of the trial?
1. To determine if the two intensive treatments (M-MAT and CIAT) achieve better outcomes for people with chronic aphasia compared to usual care.
2. To define the participant characteristics that determines responsiveness to M-MAT and CIAT.

Who is directing the trial?
Associate Professor Miranda Rose, La Trobe University

When is it taking place?
We will begin recruitment towards the end of 2015 with a view to starting assessment in February 2016.

How many individuals with aphasia will we recruit?
We aim to recruit 198 individuals with chronic aphasia (6 months-15 years post-onset).

Who is eligible to take part?
Individuals will be invited to take part in the trial if they:
- have documented history of a single stroke resulting in aphasia
- they are between 6 months-15 years post-onset with any type of aphasia
- able to manage toileting independently
- normal or corrected hearing and vision
- are 18 years or older and able to give informed consent
- are able and willing to participate in baseline assessments, 2 week treatment period, post-intervention assessment and follow-up assessment.

Do the participants have to live in Melbourne?
No. We will be running the trial in various locations in Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania.

For more information, contact: compareaphasia@latrobe.edu.au
03 9479 2776
**KEEPING IN CONTACT**

**Chief Investigator:**  Associate Professor Miranda Rose  
**Clinical Trial Managers:**  Melanie Hurley & Abby Foster (Assistant)

Discipline of Speech Pathology  
School of Allied Health  
La Trobe University  
Bundoora VIC 3086  
03 9479 2776  
COMPAREaphasia@latrobe.edu.au  
http://www.latrobe.edu.au/compare


**Chief Investigator:**  Professor Linda Worrall  
**Clinical Trial Manager:**  Marcella Carragher

CCRE in Aphasia Rehabilitation  
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences  
The University of Queensland  
St Lucia QLD 4072  
03 9479 1812  
Linda:  l.worrall@uq.edu.au  
Marcella:  m.carragher@latrobe.edu.au


**Chief Investigator:**  Professor Linda Worrall  
**Clinical Trial Manager:**  Renee Allan

CCRE in Aphasia Rehabilitation  
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences  
The University of Queensland  
St Lucia QLD 4072  
07 3365 7595  
Linda:  l.worrall@uq.edu.au  
Renee:  r.allan1@uq.edu.au