

RESEARCH CAPABILITY



PODIATRY



Acknowledgement of Country

LaTrobe University proudly acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands our campuses are located on.

We recognise that Indigenous Australians have an ongoing connection to the land and the University values their unique contribution both to the University and the wider Australian society.

We are committed to providing opportunities for Indigenous Australians, both as individuals and communities through teaching and learning, research and community partnerships across all our campuses and online.

We pay our respects to Indigenous Elders, past, present and emerging.

Indigenous art by Dixon Patten of Bayila Creative



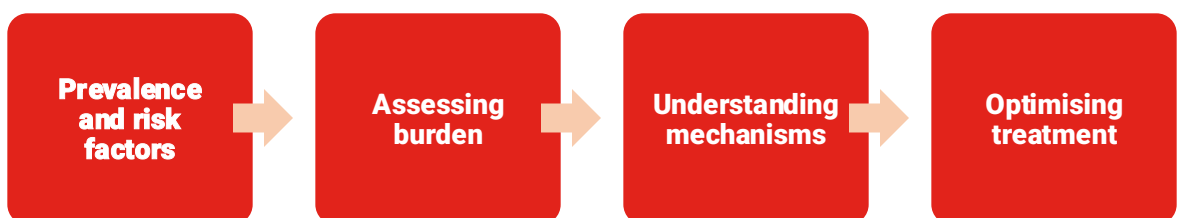


OUR VISION

To improve health and physical performance by conducting high-quality, innovative and impactful research relating to the foot in health and disease.

OUR FOCUS

Our research focuses on improving the management of specific foot conditions by understanding the prevalence, risk factors, associated burden and mechanisms involved in their development as well as evaluating the effectiveness of treatments. We work collaboratively with interdisciplinary teams, as well as industry partners to solve real world problems.



RESEARCH CAPABILITY

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To improve our understanding of the causes, impact, clinical assessment and management of foot and ankle disorders.
- To build research capacity to maximise research outputs, impact and recognition.
- To work with clinical and industry partners to ensure our research is relevant to key stakeholders, health services and patients.

OUR STAFF

Our researchers conduct epidemiological and risk factor studies, clinical trials and systematic reviews, and laboratory-based studies to investigate movement disorders and the effects of interventions aimed at these disorders.

We also have extensive experience with online questionnaires and qualitative research studies.

OUR HDR STUDENTS

Our higher degree by research (HDR) students, including those enrolled in Masters by research and PhD degrees, undertake highly impactful applied research projects.

Their work spans the breadth of our research scope. Current PhD students are engaged in a wide range of projects, including:

- Foot strengthening in plantar heel pain
- 3D foot scanning
- Treatment of midfoot osteoarthritis
- Gait retraining in medial tibial stress syndrome
- Development of safe shoes for older fallers
- Charcot neuroarthropathy.



STAFF PROFILES



Shan Bergin

Dr Shan Bergin is a Senior Lecturer in the Discipline of Podiatry. In addition, Shan works in the disability sector in the area of quality and risk management. Shan is an experienced clinical educator who also teaches research, clinical assessment, and high-risk foot subjects across all year levels. Shan has a clinical and research background and was awarded a PhD in 2009. Her thesis incorporated a state-wide prevalence study for diabetes-related foot complications and an evaluation of community-based services that were available to this patient cohort. To facilitate her prevalence study, Shan developed and validated a survey tool to collect clinical data.

Key research interests:

- diabetes related wound management
- the impact of psychosocial factors on clinical outcomes
- health services research.



Shannon Munteanu

Professor Shannon Munteanu is Head of the Discipline of Podiatry. Having worked in the higher education sector for more than 20 years, Shannon is internationally recognised for his applied research investigating musculoskeletal disorders of the foot and ankle. He has extensive experience in curriculum design and delivery – his teaching interests include integrating evidence into practice, clinical biomechanics, and the assessment and management of musculoskeletal disorders of the lower limb.

Key research interests:

- clinical trials
- foot osteoarthritis
- Achilles tendon disorders.



Hylton Menz

Professor Hylton Menz is a Senior Research Fellow in the Discipline of Podiatry with a research focus on musculoskeletal foot problems in older people, extending from laboratory-based biomechanical studies through to analysis of epidemiological datasets and the conduct of clinical trials. In 2016, Hylton was awarded a Doctor of Science and in 2020 he became the first podiatrist to be inducted into the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences. Hylton is co-chair of the Australian Foot and Ankle Research Network, co-chair of the Outcome Measures in Rheumatology Foot and Ankle Working Group, and serves on the steering committee of the International Foot and Ankle Osteoarthritis Consortium.

Key research interests:

- osteoarthritis
- balance and falls
- footwear and orthoses.



Karl Landorf

Professor Karl Landorf is a Professor in the Discipline of Podiatry and the Associate Dean of Research and Industry Engagement in the School of Allied Health, Human Services and Sport. He is internationally-known for his research, with a particular interest in investigating musculoskeletal disorders of the foot and ankle. Karl's main areas of research focus on heel pain and shoe insoles, and according to Clarivate Analytics Web of Science, Professor Landorf is ranked #1 in the world for total number of publications for the condition 'plantar heel pain' and #2 for 'foot orthoses'.

Key research interests:

- plantar heel pain
- foot orthoses
- plantar pressure.



Anita Raspovic

Associate Professor Anita Raspovic is an Associate Professor in the Discipline of Podiatry and the undergraduate course co-ordinator. Anita also works clinically as a psychologist. Across her career, Anita has undertaken a variety of roles in clinical practice, education, research and project work. Anita chaired the Prevention Chapter of the 2021 Diabetic Foot Australia evidence-based guidelines and is a member of the Prevention Group on the 2023 International Working Group on the Diabetic Foot guideline review.

Key research interests:

- plantar pressure offloading trials
- factors influencing the selection of offloading in clinical practice
- psycho-social impacts of diabetes-related foot ulceration.



Daniel Bonanno

Associate Professor Dan Bonanno is a podiatrist with a particular interest in the management and prevention of musculoskeletal disorders of the foot and ankle in physically active populations. He is the Graduate Research Coordinator for Podiatry and Prosthetics and Orthotics in the School of Allied Health, Human Services and Sport. Daniel completed his PhD in 2019, where he investigated the use of foot orthoses for the prevention of injury in military recruits. Daniel is currently the Victorian Director for Sports and Exercise Podiatry Australia.

Key research interests:

- running retraining
- foot orthoses
- athletic footwear.



Matthew Cotchett

Dr Matthew Cotchett is a Senior Lecturer in the Discipline of Podiatry. Matthew has a particular interest in the management of pain beneath the heel and completed a PhD which evaluated the effectiveness of trigger point dry needling for plantar heel pain. Currently, Matthew is leading a project to improve knowledge translation and treatment of people with plantar heel pain.

Key research interests:

- psychosocial aspects of musculoskeletal pain
- cognitive, affective, and behavioural factors as drivers of pain and disability
- development and validation of patient education websites.



Andrew Buldt

Dr Andrew Buldt is a Senior Lecturer in the Discipline of Podiatry. His main academic role is the coordination of a large core first year subject for allied health and nursing students. He is passionate about curriculum design of large subjects and optimising the transition for first year students into university life. Additional teaching roles include the coordination of clinical podiatry subjects. Andrew is Associate Editor of the *Journal of Foot and Ankle Research*.

Key research interests:

- foot and ankle biomechanics
- medical imaging for foot conditions
- analysis of foot morphology using 3-dimensional scanning.



Glen Whittaker

Dr Glen Whittaker is a Senior Lecturer in the Discipline of Podiatry. Glen completed his PhD in 2019, which evaluated the effectiveness of foot orthoses versus corticosteroid injection for plantar heel pain. Glen is currently involved in several research projects with colleagues and PhD students, and he is the Professional Development coordinator for the Rheumatology Health Professionals Special Interest Group.

Key research interests:

- heel pain from mechanical and inflammatory causes
- professional capabilities of allied health professionals in rheumatology
- medicines for the management of foot conditions.



Mitchell Smith

Mitchell Smith is a Lecturer in the Discipline of Podiatry and current PhD candidate. Mitchell has a clinical and research interest in paediatrics and child health. His PhD is focussed on developing clinical practice recommendations for chronic lower limb pain conditions in children. Mitchell's previous research has investigated how children with development coordination disorder interface with the podiatry profession.

Key research interests:

- paediatrics and child health
- development coordination disorder
- access to podiatry care



Polly Lim

Polly Lim is a Lecturer in the Discipline of Podiatry and current PhD candidate. Polly has a clinical and research interest in musculoskeletal disorders of the foot and ankle in special populations. Her PhD investigates the effectiveness of foot orthoses for midfoot osteoarthritis. Polly's previous research has involved investigating foot health and physical activity in children with Down syndrome, as well as intervention and non-surgical management of arthritic foot conditions.

Key research interests:

- effectiveness of foot orthoses in the management of midfoot osteoarthritis
- interventions and non-surgical management for arthritic foot conditions
- Foot health and physical activity in children with Down syndrome

WHY CHOOSE PODIATRY AT LA TROBE?



1st in the world

La Trobe podiatry is ranked #1 in the world for research

expertscape.com/ex/podiatry



Top 200 globally

La Trobe's clinical, pre-clinical and health subjects are ranked in the world's top 200

Times Higher Education (THE), 2022, *World University Rankings 2023 by subject: clinical, pre-clinical and health*



1st in Victoria

We're the best in Victoria and third in Australia for employer satisfaction, with a rating of 88.1 per cent

Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT), 2023, *2022 Employer Satisfaction Survey* [PDF, 812 KB]



Top 20 worldwide

We're ranked in the top 20 universities worldwide for our research on key diseases and conditions, our support for healthcare professions, and the health of our students and staff

Times Higher Education (THE), 2023, *Impact Rankings 2023: good health and well-being*

WORLD CLASS RESEARCH AND TRAINING FACILITIES

LA TROBE PODIATRY CLINIC

La Trobe Podiatry Clinic delivers high quality clinical podiatry services through our students and supervising registered podiatrists to the local community in Melbourne's north.

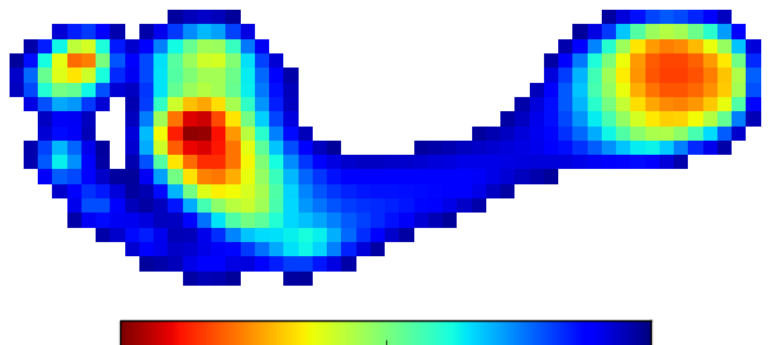
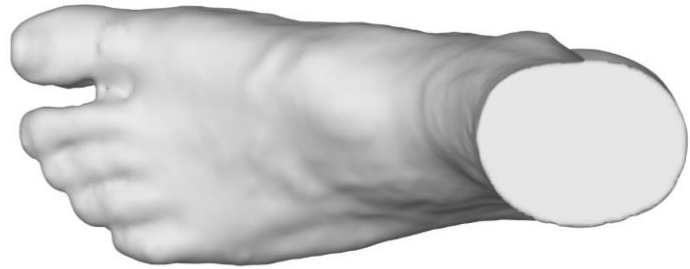
The clinic's purpose-built facilities have 17 consulting rooms, a paediatric consultation room, a fully equipped surgical operating theatre, an orthoses laboratory, a plaster casting room and a 40-seat lecture room.

In addition to providing high quality foot care to patients and teaching experiences for undergraduate students, the clinic also facilitates recruitment of participants for the conduct of clinical trials.



FOOT AND ANKLE LABORATORY

The Foot and Ankle Laboratory is located in the Health Sciences 2 building of the Bundoora campus, and houses a state-of-the-art 3-dimensional laser scanner (the IN-FOOT Scanner), a high-resolution plantar pressure platform (the Novel EMED-SF system), in-shoe plantar pressure system (the Novel Pedar), optical treadmill gait analysis system (OptoGait) and wearable sensor balance and gait analysis system (Gyko). The laboratory also features instrumentation for measuring muscle strength, and in-shoe temperature and humidity testing for the evaluation of footwear and foot orthoses.



GAIT LABORATORY

The Gait Laboratory, located over two floors in the Health Sciences 3 building, is a state-of-the-art research facility within La Trobe's Sport and Exercise Medicine Research Centre. It is used to understand the structure and function of the musculoskeletal system, and causes, prevention and treatment of musculoskeletal injuries and disease.

The Gait Laboratory, the largest of its type in the southern hemisphere, incorporates a Vicon 3D motion analysis system, GAITRite walkway, Neurocom Balance Master and Humac Dynamometer.



LA TROBE SPORTS PARK

The La Trobe Sports Park is located on 60 hectares in the south-west corner of the University's campus in Bundoora, Melbourne. The \$81 million precinct supports major participation sport events, grassroots sport competitions and recreation opportunities. It also trains the next generation of sport industry professionals through a world-class student placement program.

The Sports Park includes a FIFA-accredited synthetic football-pitch, multiple soccer and cricket ovals, a competition-grade AFL oval, and a baseball diamond with central Pavilion and Function facilities. Stage 2 of the Sports park precinct was completed in January 2020 and includes the state-of-the-art Sports Stadium.



INDUSTRY PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

CLINICAL PARTNERS

The Discipline of Podiatry's research is closely aligned with the Academic and Research Collaborative in Health (ARCH). Established in 2019, the ARCH brings together academics, clinicians, consumers, healthcare professionals, health and social care agencies and policy makers skilled in the translation of interdisciplinary research.

Future research leaders have access to specialist mentoring pathways in clinical research and implementation science. Clinicians at each site also benefit from education and training in evidence-based practice, consumer engagement and the implementation of research projects. Research and higher degree students receive outstanding site-based clinical research supervision and opportunities to work directly with consumers and healthcare partners to ensure their work quickly has impact. Clinical placements offer students valuable experience at the clinical interface.

The ARCH is all about implementation science. It specialises in translational research co-produced with consumers and health partners to optimise healthcare quality, outcomes, safety, and the patient experience. The ARCH benefits from La Trobe University's status as an Affiliate Member of the Melbourne Academic Centre for Health, Monash Partners, and the A+ Research Alliance.



INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

By connecting businesses, industry and government with leading researchers, educators and students to create solutions that positively impact our communities, La Trobe University aims to be an industry partner of choice.

The Discipline of Podiatry has a strong track record in partnering with industry to translate our research findings for commercial and health-related outcomes. We have previously partnered with footwear companies, orthotic laboratories and pharmaceutical companies on a wide range of clinically- and industry-relevant research projects.

Students enrolled in our Industry PhD program undertake a research project that addresses real-world challenges identified by and of critical importance to the industry partner. The PhD student is embedded within the industry partner organisation for a period of time during the program, as agreed between the partners. During the industry PhD, the student is co-supervised by La Trobe and the industry partner, and his/her PhD scholarship is co-funded by both.

Recent examples of industry collaboration include the development and commercialisation of footwear to improve balance in older people at risk of falling, and validation of pressure-sensing insoles to help predict foot ulceration in people with diabetes.



OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE WITH OUR RESEARCH TEAM

There are numerous opportunities to partner with us on research ideas and projects, including:

- » **Honours projects** (12 months' duration)
- » **Masters/PhD projects** (2-3 years duration, may require some funding)
- » **Collaborative grant applications**
- » **Research consultancy**

CONTACT US

If you are interested in working together but don't know where to start, please just email or give us a call:

Professor Hylton Menz
Research Coordinator, Discipline of Podiatry

E: H.Menz@latrobe.edu.au

P: +61 3 9479 6308



WANT TO KNOW MORE? GET IN TOUCH

Professor Hylton Menz
Research Coordinator
Discipline of Podiatry
School of Allied Health, Human Services and Sport
La Trobe University

E: H.Menz@latrobe.edu.au
P: +61 3 9479 6308

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