

2022 Global Change Youth Research Project Description

Please use this template to create a description of each research project, eligibility requirements and expected deliverables. Project details can then be uploaded to each faculty, school, institute, and centre webpage prior to the launch of the program.

FoM- School of Public Health

Project title:	Mental health and addictions: Impact of COVID-19 on medicine prescriptions in Australia
Project duration, hours of engagement & delivery mode	4 consecutive weeks during Winter Vacation (June 27 – July 22) and 1 day a week during semester 2, 2022 (July 25 – October 29). Hours of engagement must be between 20-36hrs per week COVID-19 considerations: Partial on-site attendance is preferred. However, the project can be completed under a remote working arrangement.
Description:	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the management of mental health and addictions in health systems around the world. This project aims to understand the impact of COVID-19 on smoking cessation medicines dispensed in Australia. The number of prescriptions supplied over time will be investigated across different states, age groups, genders and concessional patient categories to see how the impact of COVID-19 varied across the groups. The observed change in consumer behaviour prompted by COVID-19 and the resulting public health measures is important to understand in an effort to improve management of medicines used for the treatment of mental health and addictions during potential future waves of COVID-19 and other pandemics.</p> <p>This research is a secondary analysis of administrative datasets capturing all prescriptions provided through Australia's government subsidised medicines program, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Data processing and descriptive analyses have already been completed. The student will conduct statistical analyses and help draft a manuscript together with other members of the team.</p>
Expected outcomes and deliverables:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Applicants will learn about Australian and international medicine classification systems. Applicants will identify relevant medicines using Australia's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) codes and the World Health Organization's Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical (ATC) codes.2. Applicants will further develop quantitative data analytical and data visualisation skills. Applicants will use software such as R or Stata to produce graphs and tables summarising the PBS data to show the impact of COVID-19 on relevant prescriptions dispensed over time. Data will be stratified by geography (e.g. state) and demographics (e.g. gender, age group). Regression methods or other statistical analysis may be utilised to estimate differences in rates over time.3. Applicants will develop scientific writing skills. Applicants will contribute to drafting a journal article to publish the results of the analysis.

Suitable for:	This project is appropriate for students with a background in statistics or with analytic experience only. Applicants must have experience using a statistical software package such as Stata, R, SAS etc and some experience writing or contributing to manuscripts suitable for peer reviewed publications.
Primary Supervisor:	Dr. Dolly Baliunas
Further info:	<p>Dr. Dolly Baliunas Senior Research Fellow Email: d.baliunas@uq.edu.au</p> <p>The supervisor MUST be contacted by students prior to submission of an application</p>