

POSITION DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Genetic Counsellor

PRIMARY JOB PURPOSE:

Employment Status: 1 Year Fixed Term, Part Time 0.8FTE

Employment Level: Research Assistant Level D

Award/Formal Qualifications: A clinical Masters of Genetic Counselling degree approved by the Board of Censors (BOC) for Genetic Counselling (under the auspices of the Human Genetics Society of Australasia (HGSA))

Vaccination Category: Category A

Employment Screening Check: National Criminal Record Check & Working with Children Check

Overview

The national PreGen project is an MRFF funded clinical implementation grant aiming to develop and implement genomic testing for fetal structural anomalies. The impact of different forms of genomic testing on decision making for families and health care providers regarding the diagnosis, counselling, management and postnatal care will be assessed.

Genetic counsellors will play an integral role in supporting families involved in the trial. The successful applicant will be primarily responsible for providing information about PreGen, facilitating translational questionnaires and genetic counselling during pregnancy. This role includes genetic counselling, qualitative research, database maintenance, education and research.

The genetic counselling aspect of the role will include assessing the requirements for genetic counselling and testing, planning and participating in PreGen activities, providing information about the results of genetic analysis, facilitating further genetic testing if required, recording outcomes of patient contact sessions and responding to enquiries from referring doctors and other health professionals. This role will involve a combination of telephone, face-to-face and telehealth consultations and will include liaison between laboratories, clinical referrers and existing genetic counsellors. A key component of this role involves working closely with the PreGen research team, laboratories and clinical teams to ensure effective service delivery particularly regarding variant and phenotype review meetings. This will include ensuring accurate communication of information about genetic results to both patients and health professionals, collecting or overseeing the collection of follow-up data, providing education to health professionals and working with key stakeholders to ensure the effective ongoing running of the PreGen trial. It is anticipated that some telehealth cross cover between services in different states could be required.

REPORTS TO: (Performance reviewed by):

A/Prof Tony Roscioli

JOBS REPORTING TO THIS POSITION:

Nil

ACCOUNTABILITIES: Key areas of responsibility

Providing feedback to health professionals, meeting KPIs relating to patient attendance/clinical

outcomes, providing summaries of clinical activities to clinical geneticists, maternal fetal specialists, genetic counsellors and the PreGen research team.

All staff are expected to take reasonable care that their actions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others, that they comply with any reasonable instruction that is given to them and with any reasonable policies/procedures relating to health or safety in the workplace, as well as notifying any hazards/risks or anomalies.

CORE COMPETENCIES/REQUIREMENTS/EXPERIENCE:

Proven ability to problem solve, prioritise and work to deadlines. Excellent interpersonal skills, proven excellent interaction with colleagues at all levels in health fields. Excellent written and verbal communication skills, and well-developed letter and report writing skills. Prior research activities and publication record will be viewed favourably. Working knowledge of state Ministry of Health and HGSA policies and protocols including consent and request forms for genetic/genomic testing. Willingness to undertake personal and group supervision, accept feedback and be guided by geneticists on work practices/organisation.

Challenges/Problem Solving: Clinic attendees are often grieving and distressed by receiving genetic diagnoses for themselves or their unborn child. Conversely, many people attending clinics involved in the PreGen study may not have a diagnosis or may receive an altered diagnosis after genomic testing. The successful applicant will be expected to co-ordinate appointments either face to face or via telehealth and liaise with referring doctors and multidisciplinary team members regarding testing results and patient management.

Communication: Close liaison with staff of genetic and other subspecialty services and implementation of the PreGen project in Victoria. Effective communication with the PreGen Executive Committee, laboratories performing genomic testing, prenatal departments involved in the PreGen study and scientific personnel undertaking functional analyses. Communication with local, national and international collaborators. Close discussion with other genetic counsellors and staff members from other genetic units will be required. Attendance and participation at national genetic counsellors education seminars will be encouraged.

Decision Making: Decision making and the degree of autonomy will depend on the experience level of the genetic counsellor. Patient management decisions will be made in a clinical context informed by local hospital and ministry of health guidelines informed by advice from clinicians at prenatal genomic MDT meetings. Ability to identify clinical scenarios where ethical and moral dilemmas could arise will be essential.

OUTCOMES/DELIVERABLES (Measurable Output):

- Assess family and medical history and provide appropriate genetic counselling for families with genetic disorders or birth defects.
- Discusses benefits and limitations of genetic testing options. Obtain informed consent.
- Assist families in understanding genetic disorders; probable course of the disorder, available management strategies, medical recommendations from the geneticist and recurrence risks based on information provided by the managing clinical geneticist.
- Document cases and maintains appropriate records, ensuring confidentiality.
- Maintains PreGen database.
- Conducts qualitative questionnaires with families involved in the study.
- Develops and presents educational and related programs as appropriate.
- Coordinates and supports the execution of the PreGen research protocol as needed; including

recruitment and assessment of research subjects, provision of patient advice and support, and maintenance of research records.

- Assist in the co-ordination of prenatal genomic MDT meetings.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS/INTERACTIONS – EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL:

Internal:

- A/Prof Tony Roscioli
- Dr George McGillivray/Dr Sebastian Lunke/Dr Belinda McLaren
- PreGen health economists and psychologists
- PreGen Genetic Counsellors
- Pathologists/Laboratory Scientists
- Hospital staff involved in the study

External:

International collaborators

WHS RESPONSIBILITIES:

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Take reasonable care for the health & safety of self and others in the workplace
- Ensure that there is efficient use of staff, facilities and space
- Cooperate with NeuRA policy and/or management directives to ensure a safe working environment
- Identify all hazards associated with work tasks and complete risk assessments and safe work procedures
- Immediately notify supervisors of both actual & potential hazards
- Immediately report to their supervisor/manager all injuries/illnesses
- Observe and practice the correct safe work procedures
- Wear or use safety equipment as specified such as PPE
- Participate in safety training
- Follow health and safety instructions
- Keep work areas clean and tidy.

Familiarisation and Compliance with ***NeuRA general Policies and all NeuRA Work Health and Safety Policies.***

Responsibilities of all workers:

- Be familiar with and ensure compliance with the WHS Act 2011 and Regulation 2011
- Co-operate with WHS policies and procedures to ensure your own health and safety and that of others within the workplace
- Attend all training sessions as required
- Do not interfere or misuse equipment provided for the health, safety and welfare of persons at work

Additional responsibilities for supervisors: (PCBU)

- Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) i.e. managers and supervisors, have a duty of care for the health, safety and welfare of all persons in the workplace
- PCBUs must adopt a risk management approach to managing health and safety. This includes undertaking necessary risk assessments

- Attend all required training sessions