

Research projects

How can outcomes for people with gout be improved?

Background: Gout is the most common form of inflammatory arthritis in men. It is characterised by extreme pain and swelling and caused by a build-up of uric acid in the bloodstream. It is a chronic condition, which requires life-long medication and self-management. Poor medication adherence and inadequate treatment can lead to long-term health consequences among people with gout, such as permanent damage in joints and other organs. Long-term urate-lowering therapy (ULT), if taken daily at the correct dose, can lower urate in the blood (serum urate) to the target level or below. Maintaining serum urate at the target level or below is essential to prevent gout flares from recurring, and thus checking serum urate at recommended intervals is an important aspect of “treat to target” in the management of gout.

Research: A number of research projects using quantitative and qualitative methods are available.

Using baseline data collected in a randomised controlled study to evaluate mobile apps for people with gout¹, the **first study** aims to:

1. Identify opportunities for self-management support in gout by examining patient perspectives on causes of gout (knowledge gaps), use of technology in managing health, ULT-taking patterns, healthcare utilisation (practices), and their influence on serum urate and patient-reported outcomes;
2. Investigate the role of testing serum urate in achieving the target urate level and better patient-reported outcomes; and
3. Examine the association of serum urate levels with patient-reported outcomes, including gout attacks, health-related quality of life and work productivity and activity impairment.

The **second study** aims to determine the prevalence of gout in Australia using self-reported data from the Australian National Health Surveys.

The **third study** will use qualitative methods (interviewing doctors and people with gout) to examine the feasibility of pharmacist-led chronic care delivery in people with gout.

If you are interested in undertaking any of these five research projects (across three studies), please contact Dr Eindra Aung at eindra.aung@unsw.edu.au.

1. Day RO, Frensham LJ, Nguyen AD, Baysari MT, Aung E, Lau AYS, . . . Westbrook JI. Effectiveness of an electronic patient-centred self-management tool for gout sufferers: a cluster randomised controlled trial protocol. *BMJ Open* 2017; 7(10): e017281.