



Improving health and quality of life in rural NSW

HeLP-R TRIAL

Low back, knee and hip pain are linked to unhealthy lifestyle habits. Supporting both pain management and lifestyle change can be challenging. The Healthy Lifestyle for Pain in Rural Areas (HeLP-R) Trial aims to uncover the best ways to improve disability, quality of life and health outcomes for people with chronic musculoskeletal pain in regional NSW.

HeLP-R tests if an effective in-person lifestyle program can be delivered via virtual care with the same benefit.

Where is the HeLP-R Trial?

Hastings Macleay, Nambucca, Coffs Coast, Clarence Valley, Richmond Valley and Northern Rivers areas.

Who can I refer?

People aged 18 years and older who have chronic musculoskeletal pain (low back, knee, or hip pain for longer than 3 months) and may struggle with healthy habits including weight, activity, diet, alcohol intake, smoking, or sleep.

What will my patients receive?

Eligible patients will receive one of two new physiotherapy-led programs. Both 6-month programs focus on understanding pain and its influences, and empowering patients to make positive lifestyle changes to manage their pain. Programs are delivered in Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Lismore or Grafton hospital outpatient physiotherapy departments.

How will it benefit my patients?

- Receive care at no cost, with no wait times, ensuring timely access to support.
- Access holistic, high quality proven treatments for pain and healthy lifestyle change in one program.
- Work with a supportive highly skilled team who focus on practical skills and confidence to manage pain long-term.
- Contribute to local research that will help improve services for others in the community and in rural health.

How will I be involved?

Treating Physiotherapists will contact you to let you know if your referred patients are eligible and consent to participate in the trial. You will receive an initial update on their care and management plan, and a discharge summary at the completion of the intervention.

How to refer or enrol?

Please email referrals to: MNCLHD-HELPRTRIAL@health.nsw.gov.au

For questions or to learn more about the study contact the study team: Principal Investigator - Professor Christopher Williams, University Centre for Rural Health and MNC Local Health District at ucr.trials@sydney.edu.au or visit the trial registry (<https://clinicaltrials.gov/study/NCT07173335>).

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