Boehringer Ingelheim COPD Research Fellowship

Recipient: Dr Anne Holland  Value: $160,000

Project title: Benefits and costs of home-based pulmonary rehabilitation in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is characterized by shortness of breath on exertion, marked disability and frequent hospitalisation. Pulmonary rehabilitation is a highly effective treatment for COPD that improves exercise capacity, reduces breathlessness, improves quality of life and reduces health care costs, however less than 1% of the 1.2 million Australians with symptomatic COPD receive Pulmonary Rehabilitation each year. A shortage of programs and staff are major contributors, especially outside metropolitan areas. Even where programs exist, people with COPD are frequently unable to participate, with travel and transport to centre-based programs frequently identified as barriers to uptake.

This project is testing whether a pulmonary rehabilitation program conducted entirely at home can achieve equal benefits to a hospital based pulmonary rehabilitation program, at an acceptable cost. If successful, this new model of pulmonary rehabilitation has the potential to vastly improve access to effective treatment for people with COPD.