

The Touchstone Study

Thank you for your interest in joining the Touchstone research program. The Touchstone study is a collaborative effort across St Vincent's Health Australia, which aims to describe the quality of care of people being cared for by palliative care services across SVHA.

Projects within the Touchstone study will focus on quality, safety, appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of end-of-life care for people receiving palliative care and will be used to inform the feasibility of future intervention studies in the care of people with advanced disease. Retrospective data may be collected from a range of medical record data sources across SVHA inpatient palliative care units to explore the clinico-demographics, outcomes, and healthcare interventions of people cared for by palliative care units across SVHA.

Collaboration between SVHA palliative care services is strongly encouraged and should be considered in each application.

There is a wide variety of topics you may choose to explore, including demographics, symptoms, diagnoses, medications, use of existing interventions, performance status, and hospital service data. Qualitative interviews and research specifically targeting populations requiring additional ethical approval (such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) fall outside the scope of the Touchstone Study. Please see the study protocol for further information.

Submitting an application

To apply for research within the Touchstone Research Program, please consider the following steps:

1. Speak with the Touchstone Principal Investigator at your site about your project idea. If necessary, they will assist you to refine the idea for inclusion within the Touchstone Research Program.

St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne	Professor Jennifer Philip jphilip@unimelb.edu.au
St Vincent's Hospital Sydney	Dr Davinia Seah davinia.seah@svha.org.au
St Vincent's Private Hospital Brisbane	Professor Phillip Good phillip.good@svha.org.au

2. Complete the Touchstone Study Expression of Interest form. Submit the completed form via email to the principal investigator at your site at least 10 business days prior to the next scheduled review meeting.
3. You (or your site PI) will be invited to present (10 minutes) at the next review meeting and will receive informal feedback on the day. Meeting dates can be found [here](#).
4. Within 10 business days from the review meeting, you will receive formal feedback, including an outcome of your application.

Conditions of Research

Conditions of approval

All Touchstone projects must agree to the following conditions:

1. **Ethics and Governance**

- All projects must meet SVHA and relevant institutional ethics and governance requirements.
- 2. **Presentation of findings**
 - Present findings to the Touchstone Study investigator group and researchers when scheduled
- 3. **Reporting requirements**
 - In the absence of a peer-reviewed publication, a brief project report must be submitted to the Principal Investigators, outlining results and key learnings.
- 4. **Contact information**
 - The contact details of the project Principal Investigator (PI) may be published on the Touchstone website.
- 5. **Data Acknowledgement**
 - Any publications, presentations, or outputs arising from the project must acknowledge data as belonging to St Vincent's Health Australia.

Recommended practices

Researchers are strongly encouraged to:

6. **Engage Collaborators Across SVHA**
 - Involve SVHA researchers from interstate sites to strengthen collaboration and knowledge-sharing.
7. **Consumer Engagement**
 - Include consumer input early in the research process.
 - An introduction to the *Voices for Palliative Care* advisory group can be arranged if desired.
8. **Publication and Dissemination**
 - Publish findings in peer-reviewed journals and/or disseminate outcomes through conferences, reports, or policy briefs as appropriate.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Kind regards,
The Touchstone Study Investigator Group,
Phillip Good, Davinia Seah & Jennifer Philip