



Curtin University



Faculty of Health Sciences

2020 Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarships

Strategic Project Profile

PROJECT TITLE: Living Losses in the Context of Low Grade Glioma

FIELD OF RESEARCH CODE: 1701, 1112, 1117

PROJECT SYNOPSIS: Primary brain tumours have substantial social and economic impacts on patients and their families. The most common type of primary malignant brain tumours are gliomas, which have a high rate of mortality and morbidity. A low grade glioma (LGG) is a grade 1 or 2 primary brain neoplasm, or tumour. Patients diagnosed with a LGG and optimally treated generally have a median overall survival rate of 13 years. However, due to the disease and/or treatment, this survivorship often involves living with neurological impediments such as impaired motor function, visual deficits and sensory loss.

Many patients also experience impairment in cognitive processes such as memory, information processing, attention, psychomotor speed, as well as behavioural or personality changes. Consequently, LGG patient survivorship is typically characterised by an array of psychosocial challenges and losses, including the inability to work or drive, functional impairment, altered social interactions, and seizures. These issues can cause problems in the ability to form and maintain stable relationships and can dramatically alter self-identity and self-worth. The partners and family carers of patients with LGG also incur psychosocial challenges. Many experience resentment towards the patient and/or situation, and this can contribute to relationship breakdowns and changes in roles.

Some of the psychosocial challenges incurred by LGG patients and their carers are reported in the literature and anecdotally in practice but have not yet been systematically documented or understood yet is a vital initial step before developing interventions that may address these problems. This would be achieved via (1) a systematic review of the literature of psychosocial concerns of patients living with LGG and their carers; (2) a survey and interviews with people with LGG and their family carers, to systematically document and understand the psychosocial losses, and (3) a survey and interviews with health professionals to explore their understanding of the support needs of people with LGG and their carers.

WHAT MINIMAL ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS EXPECTED BY THE CANDIDATE BE COMPETITIVE:

Honours I or 2A or equivalent;

Experience working with patients living with glioma and/or their family carers; and

Passion to make a difference in clinical care

Students are advised to contact the Project Lead listed below prior to submission of their scholarship application to discuss their suitability to be involved in this strategic project.

PROJECT LEAD CONTACT

NAME: Lauren Breen, Faculty of Health Sciences

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CO-SUPERVISOR

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EXTERNAL CO-SUPERVISOR

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