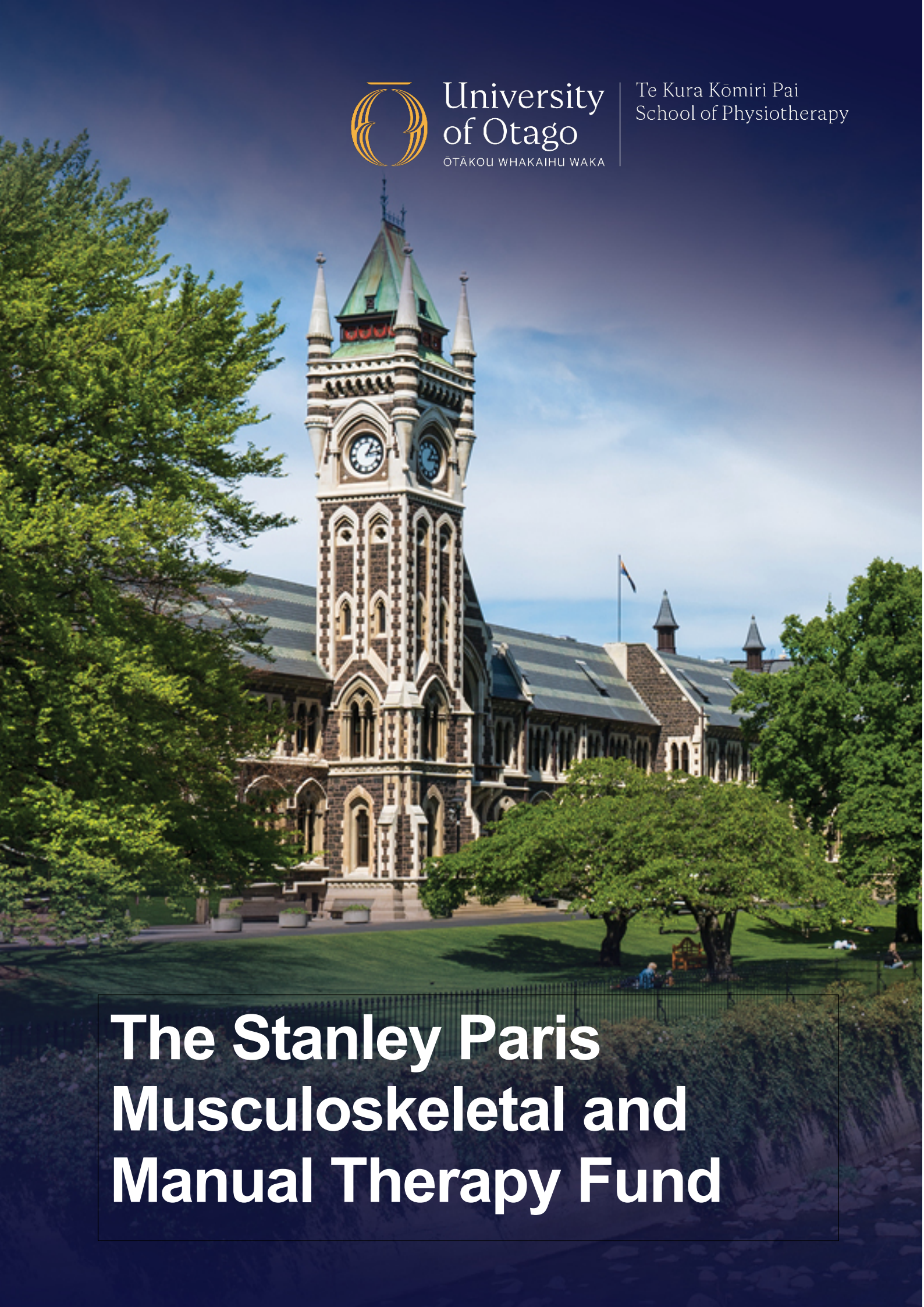




University
of Otago
ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA

Te Kura Kōmiri Pai
School of Physiotherapy



The Stanley Paris Musculoskeletal and Manual Therapy Fund

Foreword

This fund was established to recognize the support of my father, Stanley G Paris (the second male graduate of the then “School of Massage and Medical Electricity”) for fostering our shared interests in the practice of manual and manipulative therapy. After a year in private practice together in Dunedin, I commenced my overseas studies with his financial support on the condition that I return to New Zealand and give instruction.

Today, the Fund continues by supporting research, scholarship and practice in musculoskeletal and manual therapy physiotherapy. I am proud that this fund has been successful in achieving outstanding results.

It is my earnest wish that this Fund receives continued support from the profession and others so that the School of Physiotherapy can remain at the forefront of musculoskeletal and manual therapy practice.

Stanley V Paris PhD, PT, HonLLD(Otago)

FNZSP, FNZMPA, FAPTA, FIFOMPT



Stanley G Paris



Stanley V Paris



Background

The Stanley Paris Musculoskeletal and Manual Therapy Fund is named after Stanley G Paris and Stanley V Paris, father and son graduates of the School of Physiotherapy at Otago.

The Fund is specifically intended to support and strengthen activities in the area of manual and musculoskeletal physiotherapy at the University of Otago School of Physiotherapy. The overall aims are to enhance the national and international profile of the School and to promote its leadership in manual therapy research and clinical practice.

The Fund has been in operation since 2019 and during that time has provided invaluable support to strengthen and build upon Otago's reputation as a leader and innovator and has revitalised our commitment to musculoskeletal and manual physiotherapy.

The student scholarships have provided opportunities for clinicians around the country to undertaken further study, supporting them to take time out of their practices and away from their families. Many of these students have continued with further postgraduate study and retain strong networks with the School.



The Fellowship Funding has supported seven Fellows. Funding has enabled research projects, including clinical trials, and provided generous support for Fellows to develop collaborations at both a National and International level. The impact of this support has led to success in the highly competitive New Zealand research funding environment, generated publications and presentations, built capacity of researchers, and most importantly influenced clinical practice. The Fellowship initiative has enhanced the recognition and visibility of the University of Otago's manual therapy research internationally.

A highlight of the Fund was in 2024 when International Visitor Funding enabling leading musculoskeletal researchers Professor Chad Cook and Professor Nadine Foster to visit Dunedin. Activities included workshops, presentations, consultation with researchers, and a celebratory event of the achievements of the funding to date.



Background

Page 5	By the numbers
Page 6	Associate Professor Cathy Chapple (2019)
Page 7	Professor Gisela Sole (2022)
Page 8	Dr Ewan Kennedy (2022)
Page 9	Dr Olivia Galea (2023)
Page 10	Associate Professor Ram Mani (2023)
Page 11	Dr Gerard Farrell (2024)
Page 13	Associate Professor Cathy Chapple (2024)
Page 15	Postgraduate Students
Page 16	Postgraduate Fellowship Profile: Nicole Farrell
Page 18	Visiting Fellows Award

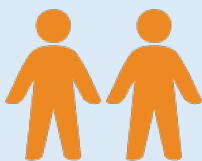
By the numbers

IMPACT OUTCOMES

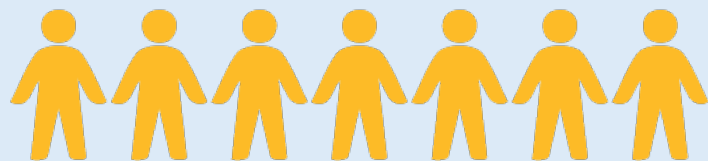
Research Workforce Employed	15
New Collaborations Made	16
Student Capacity Built	5
Presentations	11
Papers Published/Submitted for Publication	7

IMPACT OUTCOMES

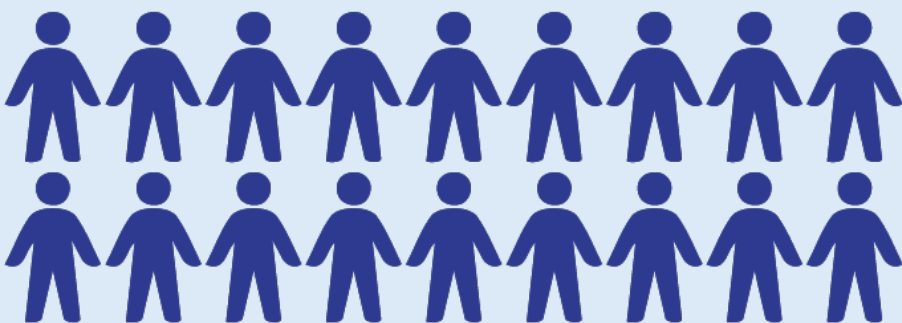
of Visiting International Fellows



of Paris Fellows



of Postgraduate Students Funded



Associate Professor Cathy Chapple (2019)



Frequency of manual therapy for
people with knee osteoarthritis:
The Opti-OK Trial

Team

Associate Professor Cathy Chapple, Associate Professor Ari Samaranayaka,
Dr Nisa Widyastuti, Dr Yana Prymachenko, Dr Ross Wilson,
Professor Haxby Abbott, Steve Tumilty

Basis for research

Knee osteoarthritis (OA) is a common condition that is increasing in prevalence. Manual therapy is beneficial for people with knee OA. There is no research investigating the frequency of manual therapy treatment sessions. Identifying effective and cost-effective interventions is imperative.

How does it make an impact on clinical practice?

This research found that adding manual therapy to a standardised best practice intervention of exercise, advice and education, was both clinically and cost effective, but frequency of treatment sessions did not matter. Findings give physiotherapists another treatment option to offer patients with knee OA. Additionally, we showed that not all participants benefitted from the intervention, highlighting that manual therapy is not indicated for everyone with knee OA.

Impact outcomes for the Fellow and their team: Presenting the research findings in several different contexts has raised my profile as a manual therapy and OA researcher, in addition to demonstrating my capability as a clinical trialist. This likely contributed to my subsequent success with a grant application to the Health Research Council of New Zealand for a feasibility trial for people with knee OA.

What next?

We are working on the manuscript submission to the top journal in the OA field, Osteoarthritis and Cartilage. We have developed a series of resources, including photographs and videos of the interventions. These will be linked to the publications and made available on our website, allowing physiotherapists access to resources which demonstrate the manual therapy techniques we used in the trial.

Professor Gisela Sole (2020)



The effectiveness of manual therapy with pragmatic multi-modal physiotherapy for rotator cuff syndrome - a pilot randomized, non-inferiority-controlled trial: The Otago Shoulder Health Study (OtShoH)

Team

Professor Gisela Sole, Associate Professor Nicola Swain, Associate Professor Meredith Perry, Associate Professor Ari Samaranayaka, Dr Ricky Bell, Jeremy Lewis, Jean-Sébastien Roy

Basis for research

Rotator cuff-related shoulder pain (RCRSP) is a leading cause of shoulder disability in middle-aged and older adults. First-line treatment is non-surgical, emphasising patient education and shoulder-specific exercise. Manual therapy is frequently added, yet the literature is mixed, and this project clarified the role of manual therapy.

How does it make an impact on clinical practice?

The clinician-patient relationship appears to be critical for patient satisfaction, confidence to self-manage flare-ups, and self-rated outcomes. While outcomes were not worse when excluding manual therapy from individualised, pragmatic physiotherapy, adding manual therapy may enhance pain self-efficacy, potentially improving long-term self-management. Clinicians can continue to prioritise individualised exercise and patient education while using manual therapy, guided by their clinical reasoning and expertise and patient preference.

Impact outcomes for the Fellow and their team

The quantitative and qualitative studies were presented at the NZ Manipulative Physiotherapy Association conference, September 2025. Findings were also included in the teaching of the post-graduate Sports Physiotherapy paper at the University of Otago, Semester 2, 2025, and will be included in undergraduate teaching in 2026. Two papers are being submitted to international journals.

What next?

The fellowship paved the way for the larger HRC funded StePS NZ trial. Collectively, the evidence supports a flexible, person-centred physiotherapy model that emphasises patient empowerment and self-management.

Dr Ewan Kennedy (2022)

Improving health services for people with musculoskeletal chest pain: a randomised controlled feasibility trial

Team

Dr Ewan Kennedy, Dr Marion Kennedy, Dr Suzanne Faigan, Dr Daniel Cury Ribeiro, Dr Garry Nixon, Dr Jimmy Zeng, Professor Tim Stokes, Katrina Bryant, Dr Gerard Wilkins, Dr Sierra Beck, Steve August

Basis for research

Chest pain is a common presentation to emergency departments, and the second most common cause is musculoskeletal. Physiotherapy is effective in managing many musculoskeletal disorders, yet referrals for chest pain are uncommon. There is existing evidence showing benefits from physiotherapy and manual therapy approaches to chest pain care, yet no randomised controlled trial (RCT) of physiotherapy. This study explores the feasibility of performing a RCT for physiotherapy management of musculoskeletal chest pain.

How does it make an impact on clinical practice?

This research has the potential to help patients, emergency departments and physiotherapists by developing a new approach to care. The preliminary findings indicate acceptability to clients, which is a key challenge in RCTs.

Impact outcomes for the Fellow and their team

This work has developed relationships with ED and physiotherapy clinicians, and a highly capable interdisciplinary research team. It has supported a lot of learning about RCT design.

What next?

The preliminary findings indicate that recruitment will be a challenge for a full RCT. Further relationships with Christchurch clinicians including ED may be necessary to properly support a full RCT.

Dr Olivia Galea (2023)

Streamlined approach to identifying adults suited to orthopaedic musculoskeletal physiotherapy management acutely following concussion: a feasibility study

Team

Dr Olivia Galea, Dr Emily Gray, Tandia Gooch, Dr Ewan Kennedy, Professor Gisela Sole

Basis for research

Concussions are the most frequently occurring traumatic brain injuries. Phenotype identification to plan appropriate management is therefore essential at early stages post injury. A simplified physical examination (SPE) designed to support targeted management planning has been developed to expedite this process. This study aimed to evaluate feasibility of the SPE to inform concussion targeted management.

How does it make an impact on clinical practice?

The screening tool underwent further piloting in a clinical setting this year in collaboration with New Zealand Rugby. Again, results were positive with the treatment model demonstrating potential for up to 50% cost saving for ACC.

Consequently, additional meetings with ACC and a clinical partner in Dunedin, as well as New Zealand Rugby have resulted in planning for full implementation to manage all Rugby related concussion injuries in Otago for 2026.

Impact outcomes for the Fellow and their team

Primary investigator Olivia Galea, as well as early career associate investigator Emily Gray, have benefitted from the project as the project has contributed to additional scaffolding in their respective research area strengths of concussion and qualitative research. Dr Galea has also benefited from upskilling in the areas of clinical trial and qualitative research design.

What next?

Analysis of results is currently underway with expected time frame end 2025, with first draft of the main manuscript by end February 2025. A subsequent manuscript with detailed evaluation of patient outcomes for those receiving physiotherapy will then be drafted and finally a possible third manuscript if the planned participant qualitative study – contingent on funding - proceeds.

Associate Professor Ram Mani (2023)



Translating research knowledge, tools, and assessment procedures on pain sensitivity into musculoskeletal physiotherapy practice: a knowledge-to-action framework initiative

Team

Associate Professor Ramakrishnan Mani and Matt Dick

Basis for research

Musculoskeletal pain is driven by complex interactions between biological, psychological and social factors. Physiotherapy assessment does not involve evaluation of the nervous system's sensitivity, a key biological contributor to pain experience.

How does it make an impact on clinical practice?

The research has supported enhancing physiotherapists' ability to identify nociplastic pain through practical workshops and evidence-based tools. The research develops educational resources on biomedical knowledge, tools and skills in assessing pain sensitivity, tailor the resource to local contexts, and build the capacity of physiotherapists to evaluate pain sensitivity.

Impact outcomes for the Fellow and their team

Dissemination of mechanism-based pain management strategies through book chapter and conference presentations. Strengthened research capacity via student supervision, mentorship and international collaborations.

Bridged gap between research and practice by delivering hands-on training and expert talks to physiotherapists. Contributed to global efforts in refining pain mechanism classification for personalized care.

What next?

Piloting across the country through health delivery research. Upskilling or provide opportunities to physio nation-wide to assess pain in clinical practice.

Dr Gerard Farrell (2024)

Specific versus non-specific lumbar spine manipulation on clinical and physiological pain outcomes in chronic low back pain: a proof-of-concept trial



Team

Dr. Gerard Farrell, Professor Chad Cook, Associate Professor Cathy Chapple, Associate Professor Kesava Sampath, Associate Professor Angela Gisselman, Professor Rajesh Katare, Lijo Varghese

Basis for research

To determine whether targeted spinal manipulation provides superior outcomes (clinical and physiological) compared to general manipulation, and if either approach outperforms a sham procedure in people with chronic lower back pain.

How does it make an impact on clinical practice?

Addresses a long-standing debate in manual therapy; Does targeting a specific spinal segment actually matter? Results will help clinicians refine their clinical reasoning, and inform evidence-based education within manual therapy training programmes.

Impact outcomes for the Fellow and their team

Strengthened international collaborations with Duke, TUFTS, and RMIT Universities, and internal partnerships with Physiology, and Preventative and Social Medicine. This helped to deepen understanding of the neurophysiological mechanisms underpinning manual therapy, and how this relates to clinical outcomes. Practical insights into recruitment, interdisciplinary coordination, and translational research in clinical settings.

What next?

Results will inform a larger, multicentre clinical trial, combining clinical and physiology outcomes.

Associate Professor Cathy Chapple (2024)



Facilitating physiotherapy students' use of manipulation in clinical placements

Team

Associate Professor Cathy Chapple, Ashleigh Taylor, Matt Dick, Chris Higgs, Dr Gerard Farrell

Basis for research

The aim of this project is to facilitate the use of manipulative physiotherapy techniques in clinical practice by final year Bachelor of Physiotherapy students, thus transferring skills learnt in the School of Physiotherapy classrooms to clinical practice.

Our previous research from the student perspective showed the importance of clinical supervisors in supporting students to make the decision to use spinal manipulation in the management of patients.

How does it make an impact on clinical practice?

We are developing a suite of resources to support student learning and will make these available to 4th year clinical supervisors. The resources will be widely available and highlight the way spinal manipulation is taught at Otago.

Practical workshops, supported by on-line resources for clinical supervisors will not only support student learning, but will provide refreshers for practicing clinicians on the theory and application of spinal manipulation.

The research will explore changes in supervisor confidence and attitudes to manipulation.

What next?

We will have a fit-for-purpose course and package of resources, that could be rolled out more broadly in New Zealand, for example to clinical supervisors in the other Physiotherapy Schools, for employers of new graduate physiotherapists and to mentors and supervisors of postgraduate students from the Physiotherapy Schools or graduates from the COMT programme (NZMPA).

Postgraduate students

The fund has provided support for clinicians from around the country to continue further education. The majority of the clinicians supported were successful in achieving the funding to support enrolment in the Postgraduate Papers: Orthopaedic Manipulative Therapy (PHTY543) and Clinical Practice (PHTY561). Successful completion of these papers as part of the Postgraduate Diploma in Physiotherapy qualifies graduates for full membership of NZMPA and IFOMPT.

The Fund also enabled support for Clinicians upskilling through research. A number of the successful applicants have now completed Masters and PhD study. This has firmly embedded Manual and Musculoskeletal practice as one of the research strengths of CHARR.

2020	Daniel Sela Gerard Farrell
2021	Ashleigh Taylor Michael Peterson Callum Law Kristina Saul***
2022	Nicole Farrell
2023	Miles Saitta Toni-Marie Blythen Mitchel Versey Kathryn (Danielle) Lapointe Kristina Saul***
2024	Anna Fenton Wei Bin (Wayne) Feoh
2025	Nicole White Sanjay Mahato Michael Wheeler Nicole Farrell



Postgraduate fellowship profile: Nicole Farrell



Postgraduate study requires clinicians to balance employment, family, and other commitments, with limited flexibility to absorb financial or time pressures. During this period, I took a period of maternity leave. The stipend allowed me to remain enrolled, continue progressing without deferral, and support family travel to Dunedin for all residential blocks, enabling my son to be brought in for feeds and cared for by family alongside his siblings. This support was especially significant during a demanding final semester, when my family experienced multiple bereavements and my son required extensive investigations and appointments. The scholarship, along with staff support from the School of Physiotherapy, provided the stability and flexibility to complete the program despite these challenges.

What has been the value of your study to your clinical practice?

Postgraduate study has significantly transformed how I practice. The Master's program allowed me to critically and integrate knowledge to approach complex clinical scenarios effectively. The program helped me reconnect with physiotherapy as a profession, evidence-informed clinical reasoning, reconnecting with the principles that guide effective assessment and treatment.

How has this supported you to contribute to Musculoskeletal physiotherapy?

Manual therapy has returned to my toolbox in a broader and deeper way, not just classic PA mobilisations, but expanded to manipulations and its use as an assessment tool, fostering a deeper appreciation of joint function and coupled movements. Completing my Master's has enabled me to supervise 4th-year students, providing an opportunity to demonstrate manual therapy in action.

What has the support of this Fellowship meant to you?

The Stanley Paris Fellowship has been pivotal in shaping me as a clinician. It allowed me to fully engage with postgraduate study, revisiting foundational knowledge in the context of real-world clinical scenarios. The Fellowship enabled me to balance professional growth with family life, allowing me to be a present and engaged mother and wife while managing the practical realities of keeping everyone fed, dressed, and hydrated. It has inspired reflection on ethical and practical aspects of musculoskeletal care and fostered a drive to explore how change can happen, particularly in private practice where burnout is common. I am very grateful to Stanley and Katherine for this.

Visiting Fellows Award

Visiting international Fellowships were awarded to Professor Chad Cook (Duke University) and Professor Nadine Foster. The Fellows visited in 2025 and their visit was arranged around a Musculoskeletal and Manual Therapy Research Week.

Both Fellows continue to support Otago through mentorship of emerging researchers, and by supporting building capacity for clinical trial research of manual therapy and other interventions for people with musculoskeletal conditions.



Pictured, from left: Associate Professor Ramakrishnan Mani (Paris Fellow 2024), Anna Fenton (Postgraduate Fellow 2024), Professor Nadine Foster (Visiting Scholar), Dr Stanley Paris, Professor Chad Cook (Visiting Scholar)



University
of Otago
OTAKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA

Te Kura Kōmiri Pai
School of Physiotherapy