Waipapa Taumata Rau
University of Auckland

Ready for research?

FOUR stories from undergraduate interns

22nd July 2026

Associate Professor Gergely Toldi

Why Internships?

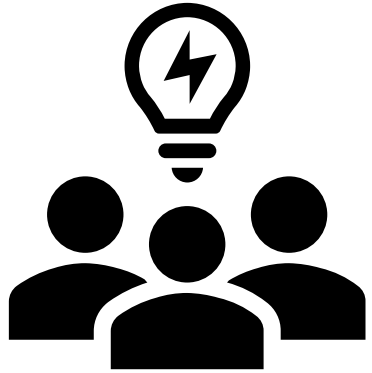
Clinician researchers are the future leaders of health research

BUT

1. Long clinical training
2. Time constraint to get good research training
3. Not qualified for a PhD programme
4. Hard to find a way in to get started

For more information, please visit:
www.liggins.auckland.ac.nz/internship
www.liggins.auckland.ac.nz/honours

What is the idea?



- Research exposure early on in medical training
- Experience of a wide variety of research to get a feel of what is available
- Qualify for more formal research training (PhD) in the future

Get future research leaders hooked on research!

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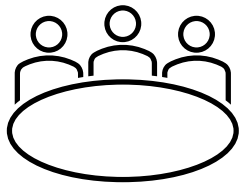
How do I apply?



INTERVIEW

Short-listed applicants will be interviewed (17 August)

APPLICATION

29 July 2026

- CV
- Details of previous academic record before medical school if relevant.
- A brief (<500 words) expression of interest.

Email to **Anna Cable-Meunier**:
anna.cable@auckland.ac.nz

START

Selected Liggins Clinical Interns start during the mid-semester break of semester two.

What are the Research Topics in 2026?

- **Improving the care of babies at risk of hypoglycaemia**

Why do babies born moderate-late preterm have adverse outcomes?

Assessment of revised standard parenteral nutrition solutions for preterm infants in neonatal intensive care

Research implementation in the Carosika Collaborative to improve equity in preterm birth in Aotearoa

How do they work?

- Flexible casual work & full-time holiday work
- Top shelf mentoring
- Involvement with different projects
- Clinical exposure (e.g., ward rounds)
- Complete, present & publish research projects

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Waipapa Taumata Rau
University of Auckland

Liggins Clinical Research Internship Programme

July 26

Emily Broomfield

Waipapa Taumata Rau
University of Auckland

Who Am I?

- Previous Study
- Why I applied for this Internship

July 26

Emily Broomfield

Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland

My Supervisor

Dr Barbara Cormack

A specialist neonatal dietitian who is the Clinical Lead for the team of paediatric dietitians at Starship Child Health, Auckland City Hospital.

Dr Cormack was appointed Senior Research Fellow at the Liggins Institute in 2020.

July 26

Emily Broomfield

Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland

My Supervisor

Anja Bronnert

Anja was completing her PhD under the supervision of Barbara when I joined the team.

As my day-to-day supervisor, she provided guidance, mentorship, and support throughout my internship.

Since submitting her PhD, Anja has progressed into a research position.

July 26

Emily Broomfield

The Projects I have worked on:

1. Secondary Analysis

2. Systematic Review

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PreMIS: Preterm Maternal Intake of Supplements

Maternal antenatal supplement use in a New Zealand preterm birth cohort and associations with sociodemographic characteristics: Secondary analysis of the AVIatioN and MoPED cohorts

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- To determine antenatal supplement use for folic acid, iodine and multivitamins among women in New Zealand who had a preterm birth, and to determine how supplement use is associated with maternal sociodemographic factors, including maternal age, deprivation index and ethnicity. To better understand which women may be at greater risk of inadequate supplement use, enabling more targeted support and healthcare recommendations.

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Analysing Vitamin status and early Intravenous Nutrition in the NICU (AVIatioN)

Moderate-to-late Preterm Babies Early Brain Development (MoPED)

What has this project involved?

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- Cleaning, organising, and validating large datasets.

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- Developing scientific writing and presentation skills.
- Gaining experience in collaborative clinical research.

```r
eth_data_long <- Jan_23_MaternalChar %>%
  pivot_longer(
    cols = c(B_Q10_Iodine, B_Q10_FolicAcid, `Any multivit`),
    names_to = "supplement",
    values_to = "value"
  ) %>%
  filter(!is.na(B_Q3_Eth_mo), !is.na(value)) %>%
  mutate(
    value = tolower(trimws(as.character(value))),
    value = ifelse(value == "both", "yes", value),
    value = factor(value, levels = c("no", "yes")),
    B_Q3_Eth_mo = factor(B_Q3_Eth_mo)
  )


chi_results <- eth_data_long %>%
  group_by(supplement) %>%
  summarise(
    test = list(chisq.test(table(B_Q3_Eth_mo, value))),
    p_value = test[[1]]$p.value,
    statistic = test[[1]]$statistic,
    df = test[[1]]$parameter,
    .groups = "drop"
  )

chi_results

eth_data_long %>%
  group_by(supplement) %>%
  summarise(
    min_expected = min(chisq.test(table(B_Q3_Eth_mo, value))$expected)
  )

fisher_results <- eth_data_long %>%
  group_by(supplement) %>%
  summarise(
    p_value = fisher.test(table(B_Q3_Eth_mo, value))$p.value,
    .groups = "drop"
  )
```

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To examine if differences in guidelines reflect differences in underlying evidence quality and or guideline development method.

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- Leading the preparation of a manuscript for publication

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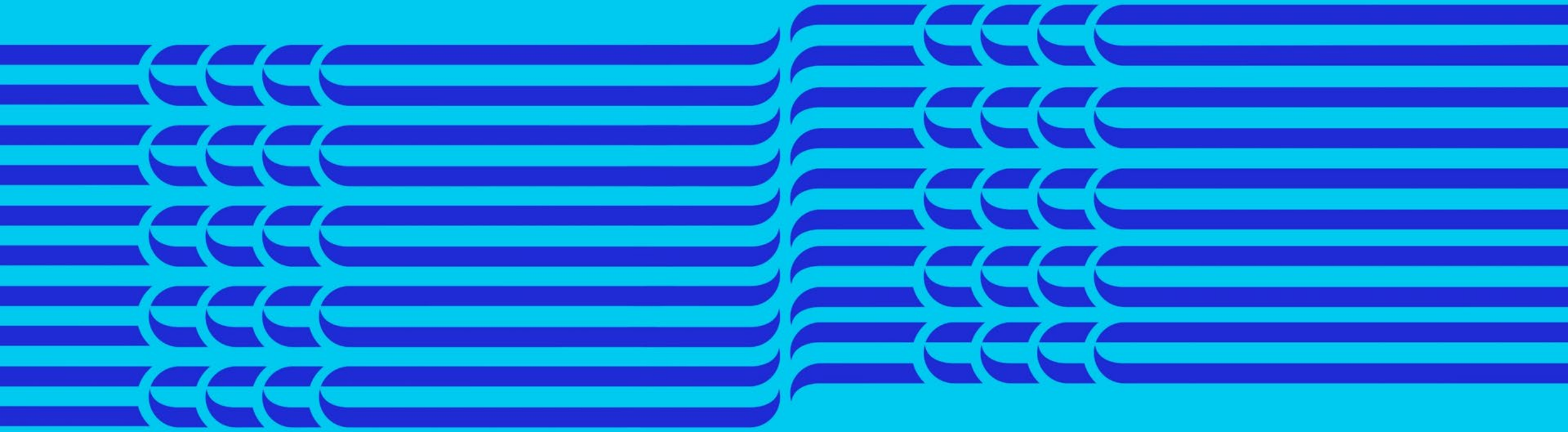
- Develop confidence in data analysis, scientific writing, presenting, and working within a research team.
- The opportunity to publish a research paper.

Thank you for Listening

Good luck with your Application !!



The Liggins Internship

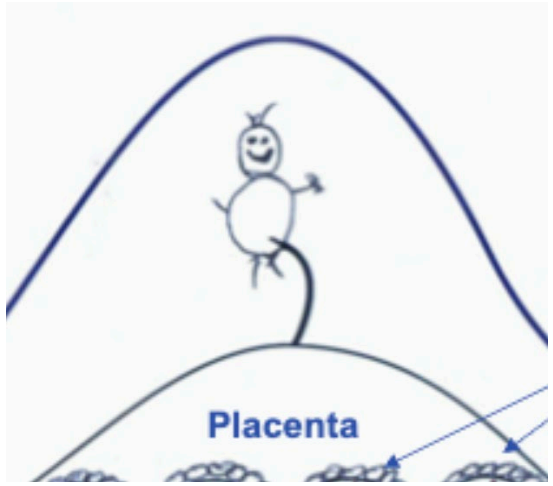
Incredible opportunities, the best people and world-class research

July 22

Danielle Mayer

Who am I?

- Bachelor of Science majoring in Physiology (2022-2024)
- **My interest in research:** Undergraduate papers and a capstone project on preterm brain injury
- No previous research experience
- Research area: **Prevention and care in preterm birth**



Preterm birth at a glance

Preterm birth: <37 weeks gestation

In 2023, 7.9% of births were preterm (~4476 babies)

75% of perinatal mortality, >50% long term morbidity

No global change in preterm birth rates over the past decade

My Research:

Implementing Taonga Tuku Iho, the national best practice guide for preterm birth, at Te Toka Tumai Auckland

- Taonga Tuku Iho was developed by the Carosika Collaborative
- It is a set of national recommendations and good practice points for preterm birth care
- Quality Improvement (QI) project

CAROSIKA COLLABORATIVE

Preterm birth care across Aotearoa: whānau-centred, equity-driven

Supervised by:
Dr Lisa Dawes

What is a Quality Improvement Implementation study?

- Exactly what it sounds like
- Improving the delivery of healthcare services and processes
- Bridging the gap between scientific research and clinical practice

My Project: Quality improvement study aiming to improve the implementation of preterm birth guidelines at Te Toka Tumai

- Meetings with a select team of clinicians
- Use the EPIQ quality improvement question framework
- Design an intervention to improve the translation of the Taonga Tuku Iho guidelines into everyday practice

Systematic Review: Short and long-term maternal and child outcomes following diagnosis of gestational diabetes mellitus using higher or lower glycaemic criteria

Identification

Records identified from databases:

- Embase
- CENTRAL
- MEDLINE (Pubmed)
- CINAHL
- World Health organisation
- ANZCTR
- ISRCTN
- Clinicaltrials.gov

Screened 3042 studies x 2

Included for qualitative analysis (n=17)

Included for quantitative analysis (n=12)

Data Extraction

Supervised by Dr Qiliang Liu

Study Assessments:

- ROB1 (Risk of Bias) considerations and INSPECT-SR Trustworthiness Scale (For all randomised controlled trials)
- Newcastle-Ottawa Scale considerations (for cohort studies)
- GRADE assessments (evaluate certainty of evidence)

Clinical Experiences

- Neonatal ward rounds/shadow in NICU
- High risk obstetric clinic
- Grand Rounds
- LifePaTH meetings
- Seminars/Lectures
- MRI Developmental assessments
- Donated blood to research
- Molecular genetic analysis labs
- Further opportunities in endocrinology clinics, paediatric intensive care shadowing, etc.

Thanks!

Waipapa Taumata Rau
University of Auckland

Ready for Research?

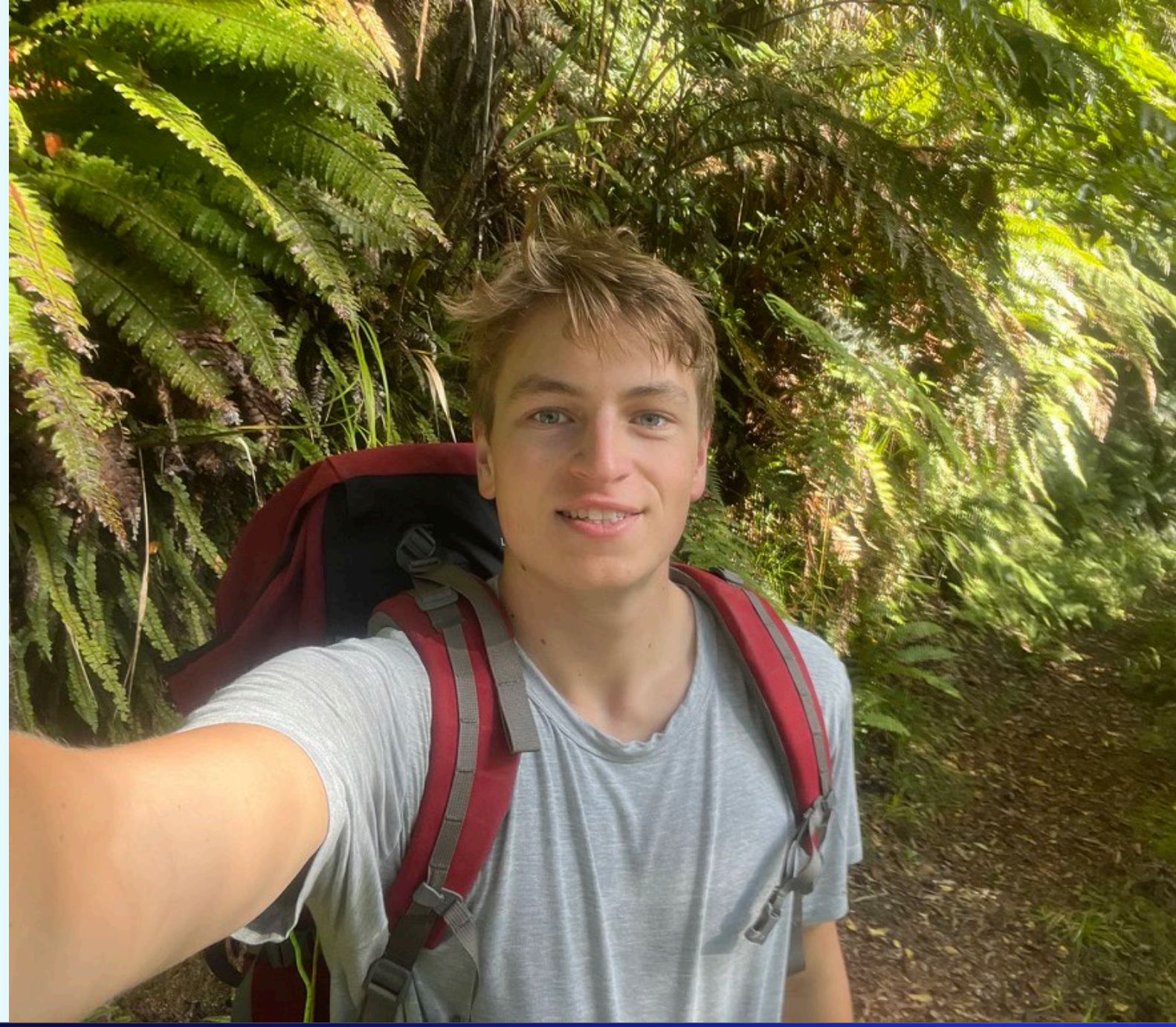
Why you should apply for the Clinical Research Internship

July 22

Jake Fuyala

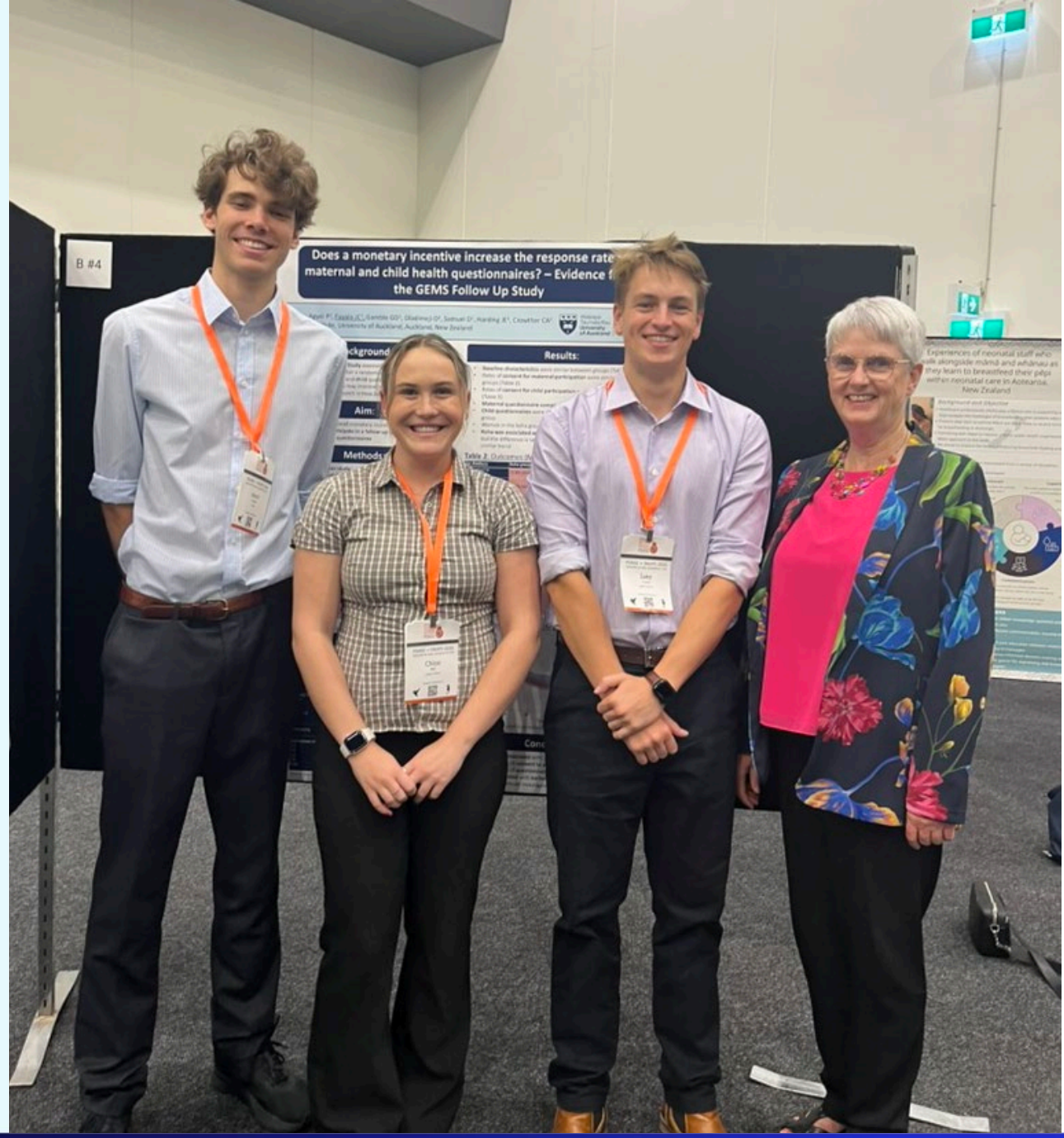
About Me

- Westlake Boys High School
- First year Health Science in 2024
- Medicine in 2025
- **No research experience**
- **Clueless** about specialty training



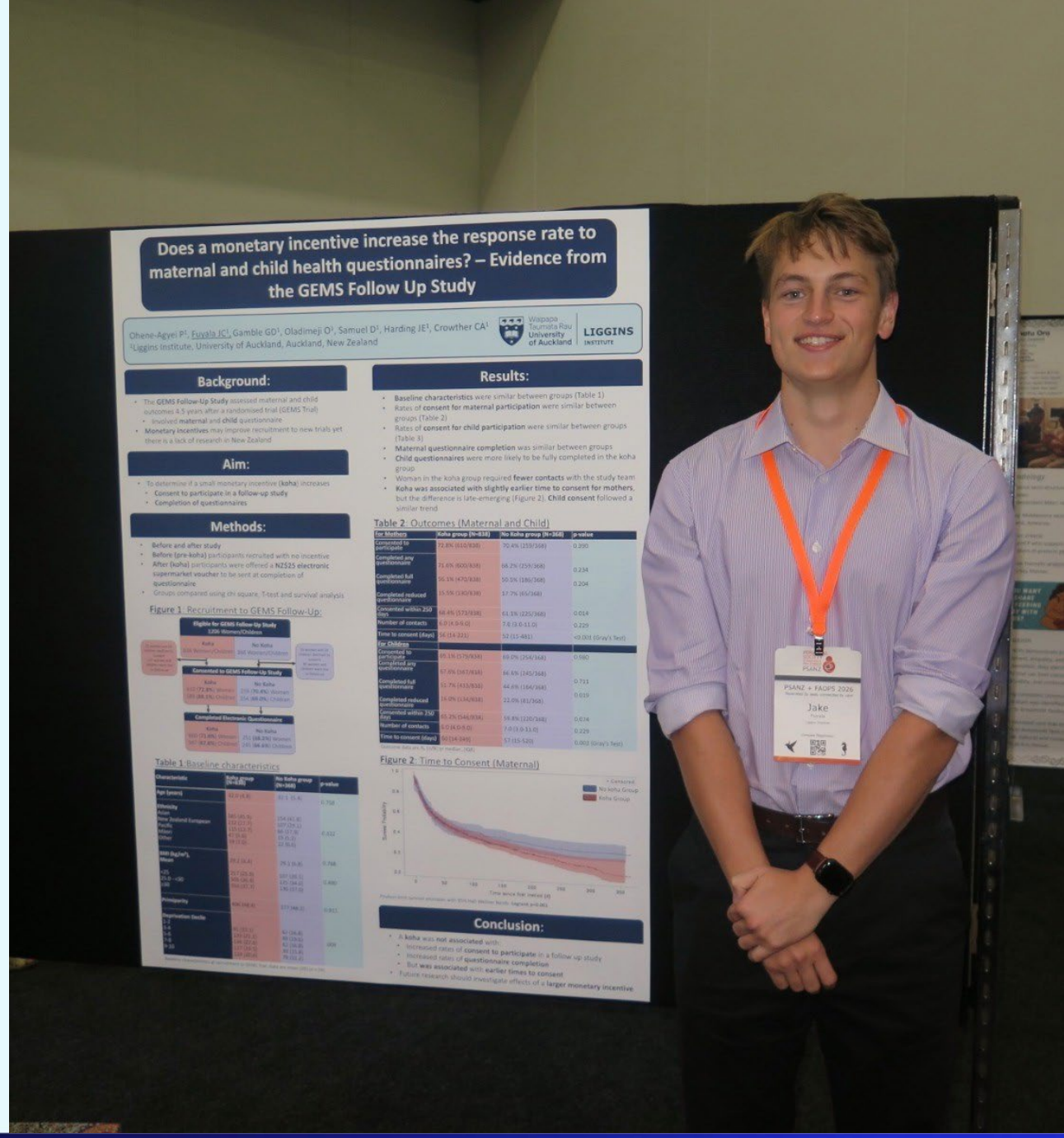
My Supervisor

- **Distinguished Professor Dame Jane Harding**
  - Experienced neonatologist
  - Professor of neonatology



My Project:

Does a monetary incentive increase the response to maternal and child health questionnaires? – Evidence from the GEMS Follow Up Study



What is the GEMS Study?

- RCT completed in 2019
- 4061 participants
- Investigated different diagnostic thresholds for diagnosing GDM
- 4.5-year **Follow Up Study** completed in 2023
  - Investigated long term impacts on maternal & child health

How do you Increase Response to Follow Up?

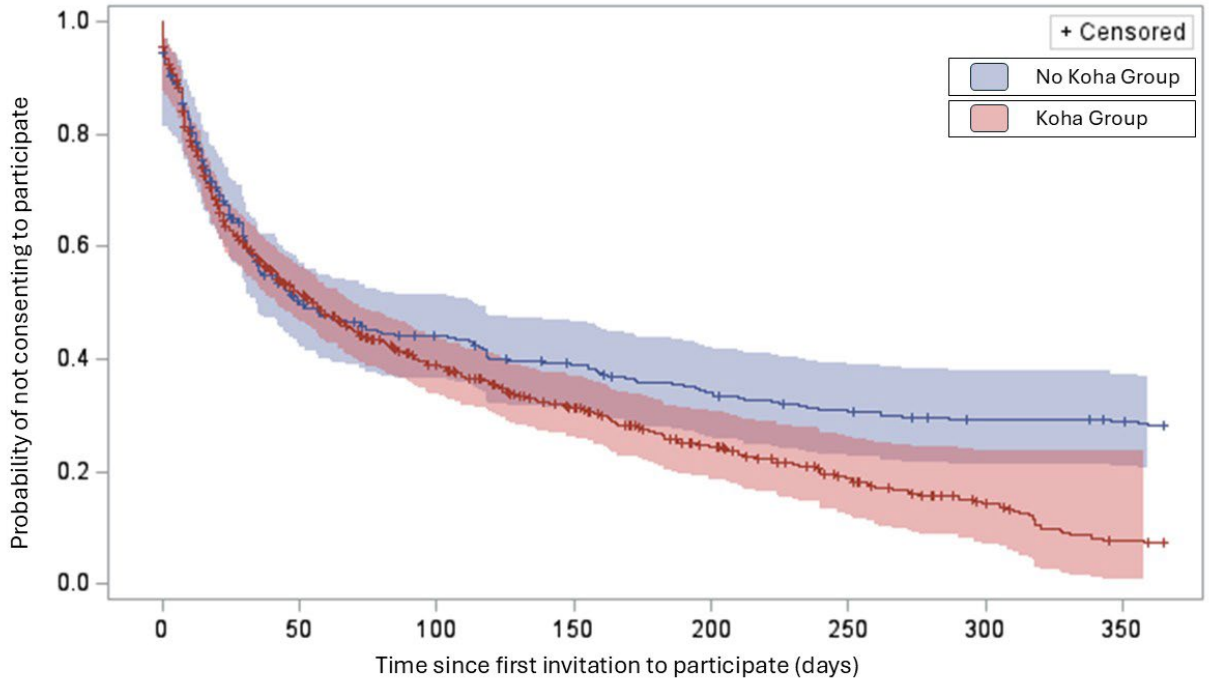
- We conducted a before and after study
- Tested if $25 supermaket voucher increased consent rates and questionnaire completion
- **Before**:
  - No incentive
- **After**:
  - Koha ($25 voucher)

What did we Find?

Table 2: Outcomes for Koha and No Koha groups

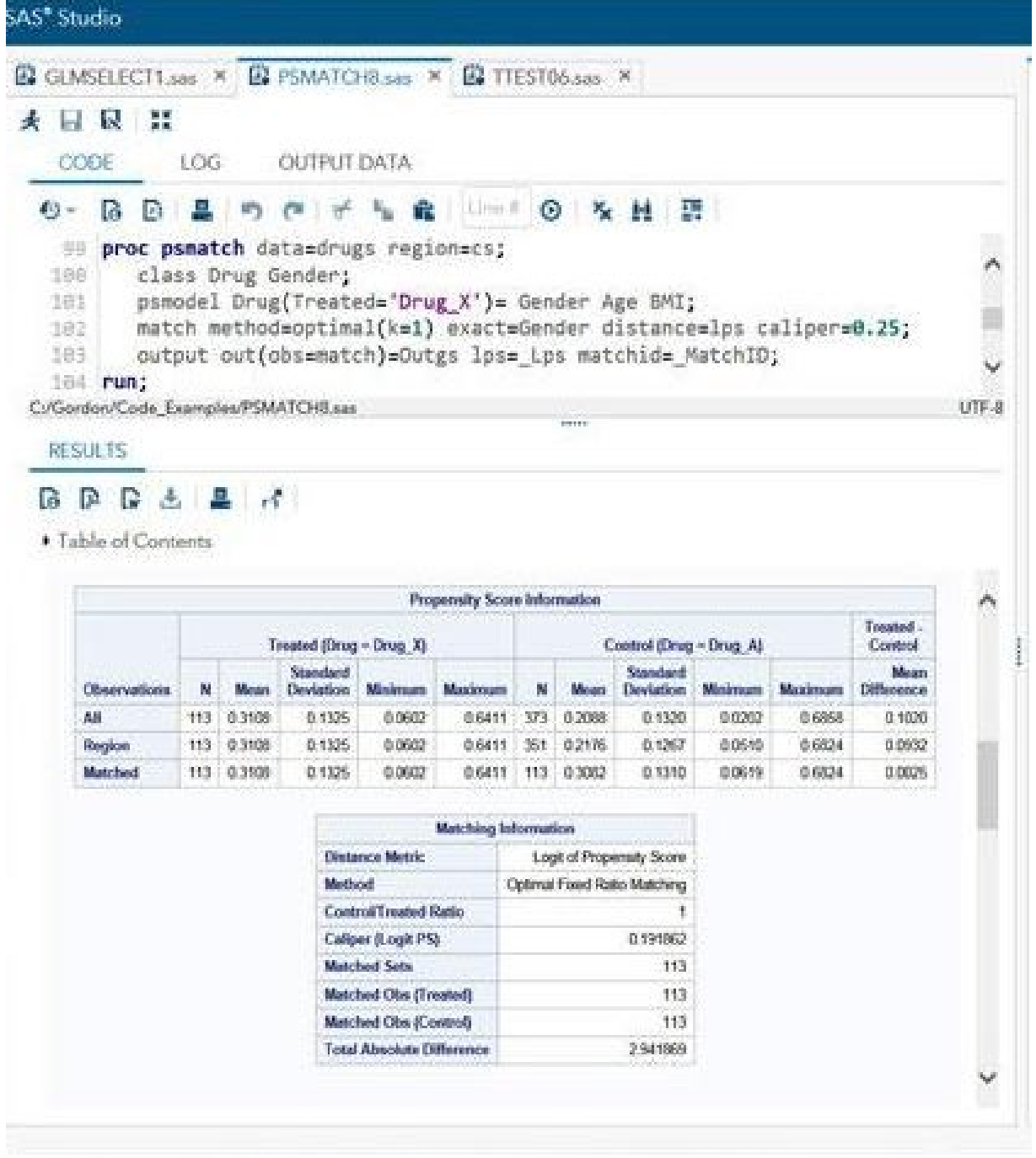
	Koha N=838	No Koha N=368	Risk Difference (95% CI)	p-value
Mother consented to participate %, (n/N)	72.8 (610/838)	70.4 (259/368)	2.4 (-3.1, 8.0)	0.390
Consented to participate for **child** %, (n/N)	69.1 (579/838)	69.0 (254/368)	0.1 (-5.6, 5.8)	0.980

Figure 1: Survival curve of **time to maternal consent** to participate in Koha and No Koha groups censored at one year



Skills & Experiences

- **Data analysis**
  - After all the data was in, I learnt to code in SPSS and SAS to interpret the results
    - Became <u>really good</u> at emailing people for help



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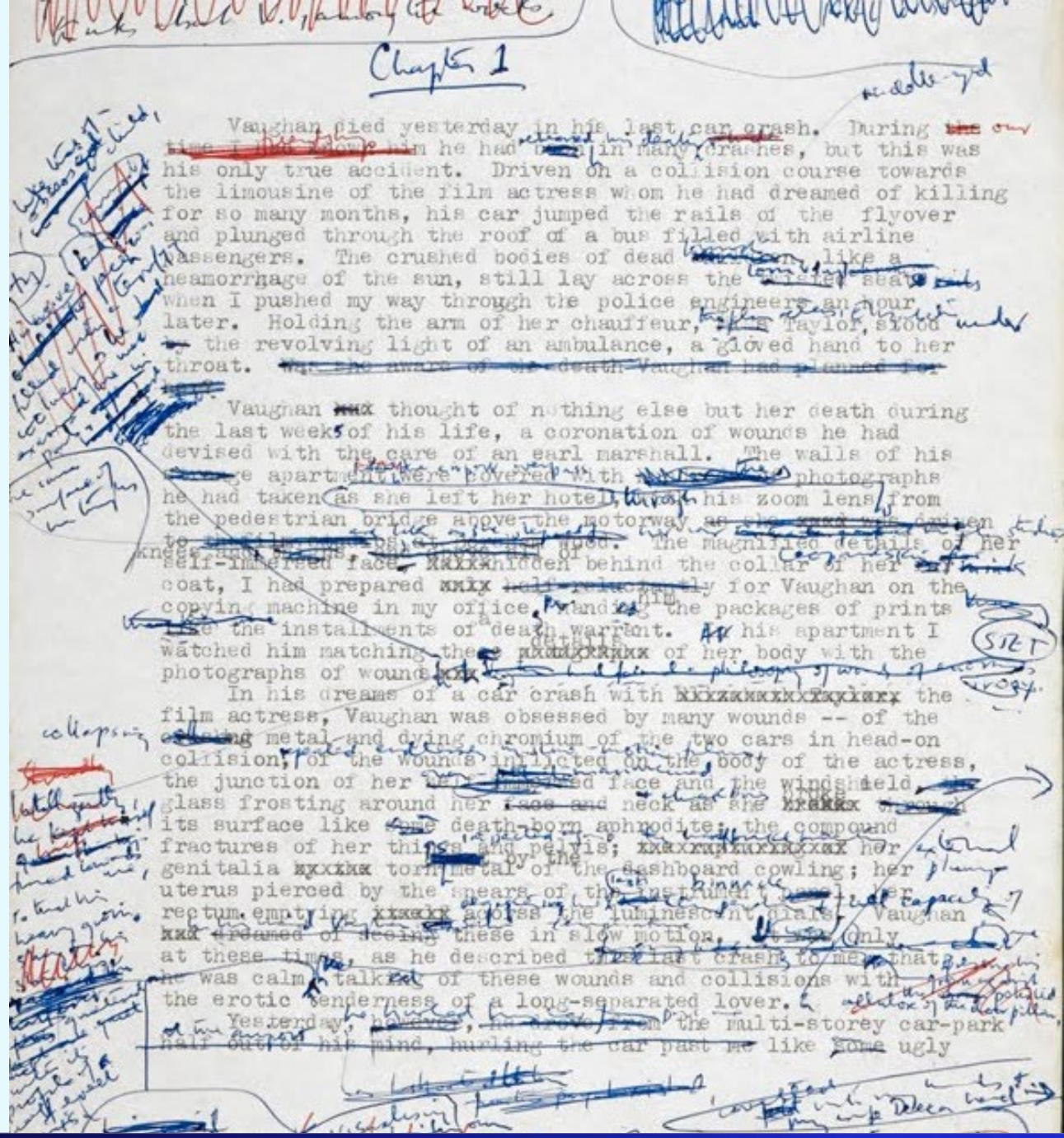

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- **Drafting & Editing the manuscript**
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- **Submitting to a Journal**
  - Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health

Preparing an Abstract

- A concise, self-contained summary of a research paper
- Elevator pitch
- Normally consists of
  - Background
  - Methodology
  - Results
  - Conclusions
- Submitted my **abstract for conference** shortly after Year 2 finished

PERINATAL SOCIETY of Australia & New Zealand PSANZ

Research Dissemination

- Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand (PSANZ) Conference
  - Perth, WA
- National Women's Annual Clinical Report (ACR) Day
  - Auckland Hospital
- HealtheX 2026
  - Grafton Campus

PSANZ - 2026

- Perth, Western Australia
- March 2026
- 3 gays of congress
- 3 Breakfast sessions
- 2 days of pre-congress meetings
- Fun social events!


BAR
CAFÉ
BAR
CAFÉ
TOILETS
DIETARIES


PSANZ
Toshihiko
Manabe
PSANZ + FAOPS 2026
shutaro

PSANZ - 2026


B #4
Does a monetary incentive increase the response rate
maternal and child health questionnaires? – Evidence f
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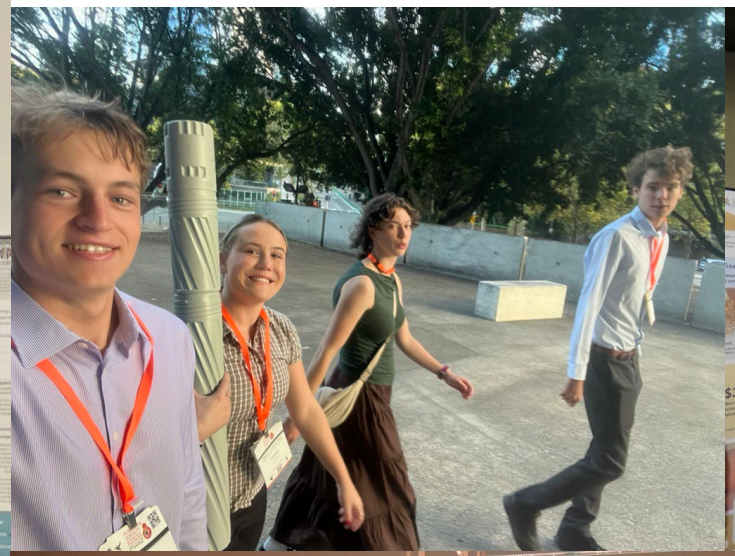
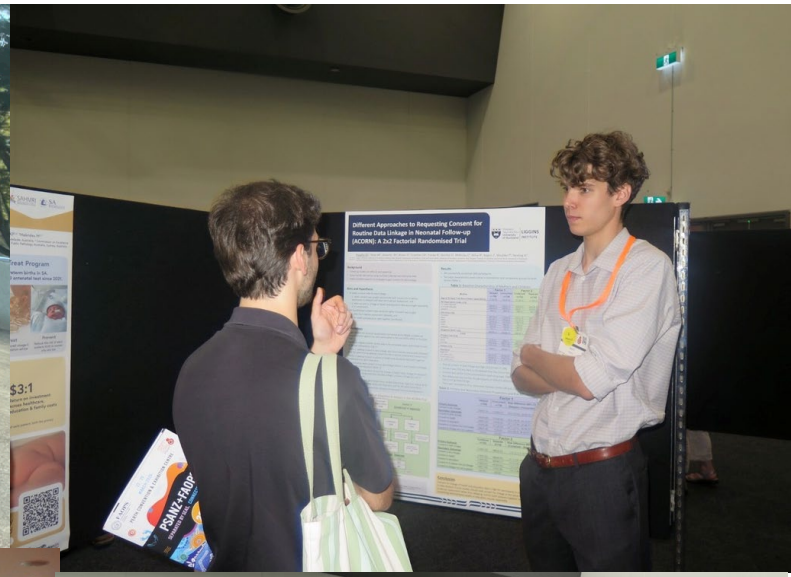
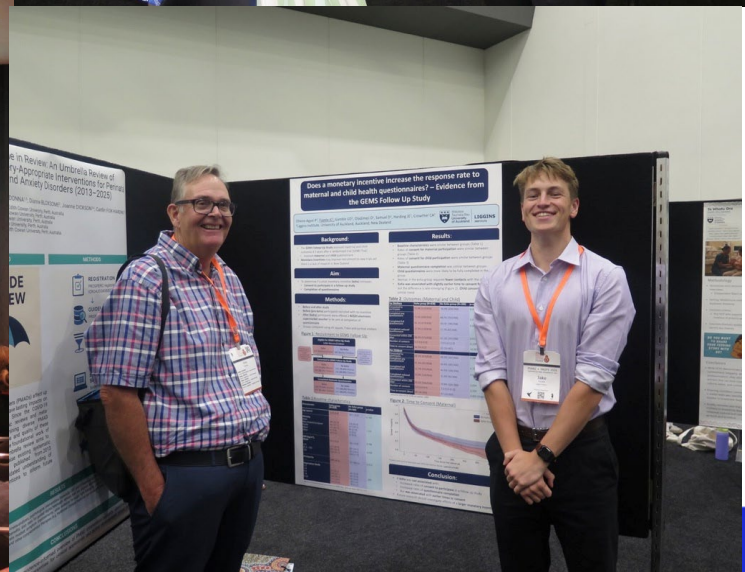
Results:




Different Approaches to Requesting Consent for Routine Data Linkage in Neonatal Follow-up (ACORN): A 2x2 Factorial Randomised Trial
PSANZ-PAQ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Why Should You **Apply?**

(Extremely) Flexible Hours

- 2-year internship
- You still get a break over summer
- Hours are based on availability
- Some work can be done remotely
- **Not in the way of your study**

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Early Clinical Exposure

- Weekly grand rounds
- NICU visits
- Follow-up assessments
- MRI assessments
- Shadowing in high-risk obstetrics clinics

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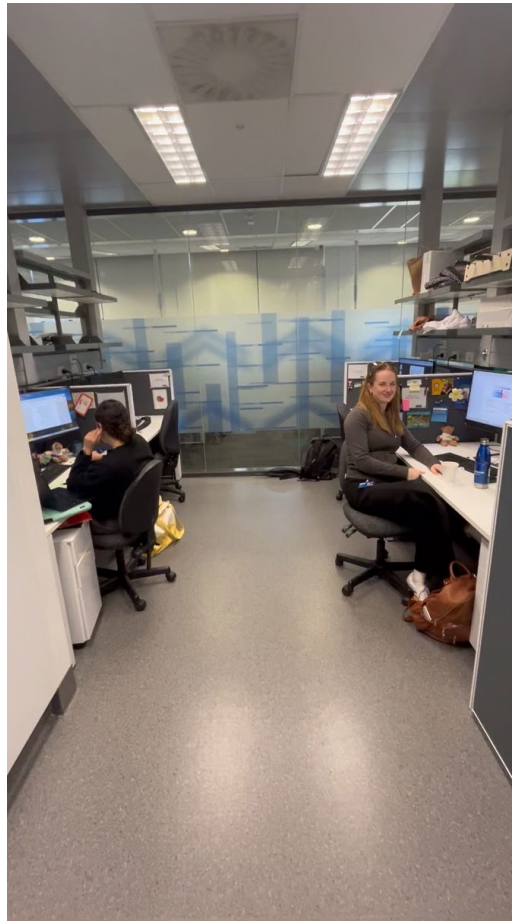
Office Space on Campus

- Desk upstairs in Liggins office
- Meeting rooms
- Good place to study
- Unlimited coffee
- Access to staff services



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Genuinely One-of-a-Kind Opportunity

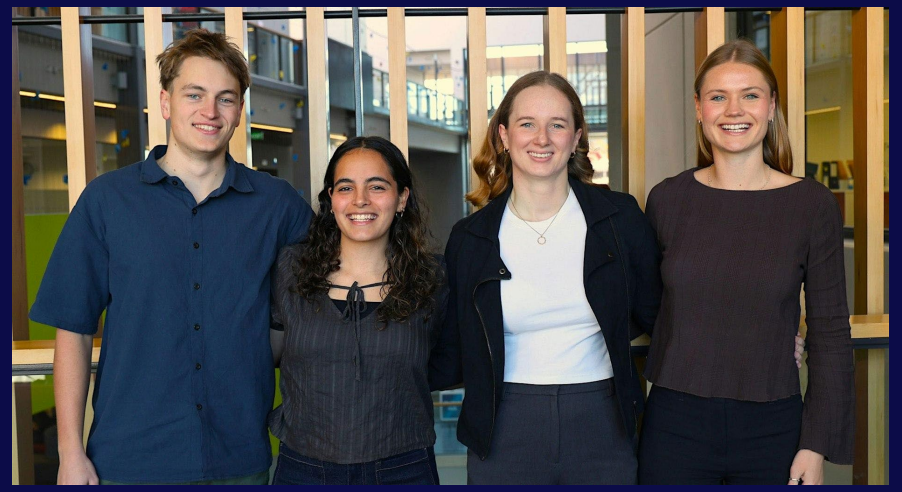
- To be a part of meaningful clinical research
- Learn more about research for clinicians
- Work alongside incredible people

Waipapa
Taumata Rau
University
of Auckland

Good Luck!

Make the most of this opportunity
and give it a go!

Waipapa Taumata Rau
University of Auckland



My Liggins Clinical Internship Experience

July 22

Shana Singh-Anderson

My Projects

Trained Immunity Induced by Vaccines: A Shifting Paradigm for Infant and Adult Immunity

Anakinra Pilot 2 – A Phase II Study to Optimise Dose and Route of Administration of Anakinra in Preterm Infants

Immunomodulatory Effects of Lactoferrin Proteins from Different Species on Human Cord Blood

What is trained immunity?

- Innate immune cells can develop a form of "memory“ which changes how they respond to later infections

- Vaccines influence both innate **and** adaptive immunity
  - e.g. BCG vaccine → shows reduced mortality to unrelated infectious diseases (other than tuberculosis)

My Role

- Conducted a narrative literature review

- Synthesised laboratory evidence in a clinical context
  - vaccine-specific modulation of the innate immune system
  - modifying factors that influence these responses
  - implications for vaccine deployment and design

		Component of TRIM				
Type	**Vaccine**	**Cytokines**	**Immune Cell Population**	**Epigenetic Signatures**	**Metabolic Reprogramming**	**References**
Live-attenuated vaccines (LAV)	Bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG)	↑ TRIM cytokines; reverses NLV-induced immune tolerance	Mixed evidence: increased and no changes found	Increase in signatures associated with pro-inflammatory genes (H3K4me3, H3K27ac)	↑ glycolysis	[11,12,20,25,27,28,31,33,34,35,36,37,38,40]
	Measles Vaccine (MV)	↑ TRIM cytokines (sex-dependent)	No significant changes found			[23]
	Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)	↑ TRIM cytokines in Vδ2 + γδ T cells	No significant changes found		↑ mitochondrial reliance and protein synthesis with ↓ glycolytic capacity in Vδ2 + γδ T cells	[19]
	Vaccinia	↑ TRIM cytokines		No direct evidence	No direct evidence	[26,51,52,55,56,57]
	Modified Vaccinia Ankara (MVA)	↓ TRIM cytokines		Suggested histone methyltransferase action		[26]
Non-live vaccines (NLV)	Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTP)	Mixed evidence; no response or ↓ TRIM cytokines with different stimulants				[23]
	Tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis-inactivated Poliovirus (Tdap-IPV)	↓ TRIM cytokines	No significant changes found			[20]
	Influenza (inactivated)	Mixed evidence: context-dependent pro- and anti-inflammatory cytokine responses to different stimulants	No significant changes found	↓ histone acetylation marks (H2BK5ac, H3K9ac, H3K27ac, and H4K5ac)		[62,63,64,65]
	Typhoid Vi Polysaccharide Vaccine (TPV)	↓ TRIM cytokines				[28]
Next-generation non-live vaccines	ChAdOx1 nCOV-19	↑ TRIM cytokines	↑ monocytes in peripheral blood, ↑ CD14+CD16+ monocytes, ↑ surface markers HLA-DR, CD40, and CD80		Markers and gene expression indicating ↑ glycolytic capacity and ↓ oxidative phosphorylation within monocytes	[24]
	BNT162b2 (COV-19)	Mixed evidence: increased, decreased, and no changes found	↑ overall monocytes, proportions of CD14+, CD14+CD16+; but functional TRIM response not consistently observed	Transient TRIM-like changes, potential H3K27ac detection		[21,22,68,69,70]

Anakinra Pilot 2 (AP2)

Background Information:

- Anakinra is an IL-1 receptor antagonist, commonly used to treat rheumatoid arthritis
- Link between IL-1 and bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD), BPD-pulmonary hypertension, and preterm brain and gut injury

Study Information:

- Collaboration with Monash University
- Randomised Phase II dose and RoA optimisation trial
- Primary Objectives
  - Establish safety, feasibility and pharmacokinetics of dosing and RoA comparison
  - Optimise exposure target for premature neonates to suppress inflammation

What’s happening in the lab?

Stimulation

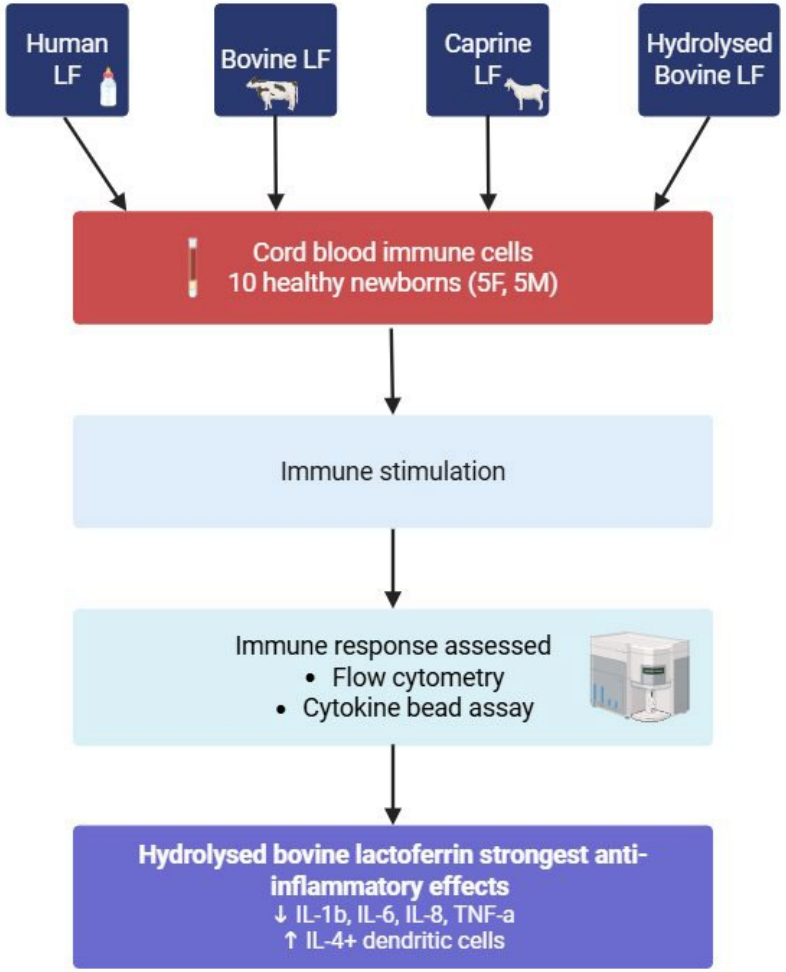
Staining

Flow cytometry

Hui Hui Phua

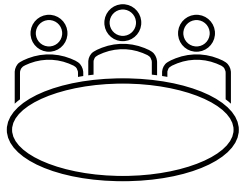
Sagar Nagrekar

Immunomodulatory Effects of Lactoferrin (LF)



- Collaborative research culture
- Weekly lab meetings & journal club
- Māori Advisory Group member
- Seeing research become clinical practice
- Supportive environment for growth

How do I apply?



INTERVIEW

Short-listed applicants will be interviewed (17 August)

APPLICATION

29 July 2026

- CV
- Details of previous academic record before medical school if relevant.
- A brief (<500 words) expression of interest.

Email to **Anna Cable-Meunier**:
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START

Selected Liggins Clinical Interns start during the mid-semester break of semester two.