



Transcript

EMF PODCAST SERIES: Professor Julia Crilly

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EMF is delighted to present the first in a series of interviews with emergency medicine researchers who have been successful in securing and delivering research projects through EMF's grant programs. You can also tune into the [Podcast](#) version.

We recently sat down with Professor of Emergency Care for Gold Coast Health & Griffith University Julia Crilly to hear first-hand how EMF funded research grants have influenced her research journey and translated to tangible improvements in clinical practice and patient care.

Professor Crilly, whose research areas include emergency care in watch houses, aged care, emergency service provision, and mental illness, [has strong ties with EMF](#). In this interview, Julia shares insights into her research career so far, and talks about the value of empowering nurses and clinicians with emergency medicine research funding.

Professor Crilly's nursing career story started as a Nursing degree undergraduate working as a carer for older people and quadriplegics who resided in the community; Julia credits this time for giving her strong insights into nursing care outside the traditional four walls of a hospital.

Along with research funding support from EMF, Professor Crilly credits her mentors for helping to nurture her emergency care research aspirations through practical support and co-investment in ideas.

Professor Crilly: I have been lucky enough to have really good mentors. Director of Emergency Care Dr David Green at Gold Coast Health, has been instrumental in recognising the need for research and dedicated nursing research positions in emergency departments.

From the university side I've drawn inspiration from the work of Dr Wendy Chaboyer, who has definitely been a for leader in nursing, and Professor Marianne Wallace who is now at the University Sunshine Coast. Those two women have shown the way for what is possible for a career in nursing.

EMF: In reflecting on her career to date, Professor Crilly notes many personal highlights, with a couple of projects in particular that she is proud of.

Professor Crilly: The first project I did around violence against nurses in the ED is a standout for me. Recognising a need to do something about it back then, and the fact that it's still an issue today really reflects the importance of that as an issue in emergency care.

The work we are doing around emergency nurses in the watch house and [trailing that model of care](#) to improve outcomes for detainees in that environment is a program of research I'm really looking forward to progressing.

EMF: Another pillar of research work Professor Crilly currently focusses on is around the emergency care workforce. As a recent example, Julia recently used a small grant from EMF to lead a study into staff stress and coping at two different sites to gain a better understanding of what things staff working in EDs find most stressful, how frequently they're exposed to those stressors and how they cope with them.

Professor Crilly: We asked doctors and nurses those questions and came up with some really interesting findings. Understanding some of those stressors is important, as well to inform and understand how staff cope when they are exposed to them.

That's been a really good collaboration between clinicians and academics and statisticians and we've been able to extend that from those two sites, so that's been a really interesting process to compare the stressors and coping strategies.

EMF: Since EMF's inception in 2007, Professor Crilly has been an investigator on ten grants from EMF totalling more than \$1M.

Professor Crilly: It's been outstanding having that opportunity and funding available for emergency care research. Absolutely that has set things up not for only myself but a lot of emergency clinicians in Queensland and so we're certainly grateful for that.

EMF: Julia says the impact of that funding has been multi-faceted and continues to deliver returns for her research career and that of other emergency care researchers, for improvements in emergency care and the health system itself.

Professor Crilly: EMF grants provide a unique opportunity for nurses and clinicians to set up programs of research where you start by understanding what the current state of play is in clinical practice, so being able to firstly know what the problem is, whether in fact there is or isn't a problem there, what you can do to change practice and to then change patient outcomes,.

The grants support you to work on a staged program of research, where you've got a big idea and you kind of know where you want to go at the end but you need to start at the beginning to make those changes and see those changes in clinical practice and in policy.

Through EMF grants we've certainly been able to do that, and there are some really good examples from emergency clinicians who have demonstrated fabulous outcomes for patients.

EMF: EMF's world-class, innovative grants programs are governed in line with Australia's NHMRC and ARC grant programs. This means EMF grants are rigorous and highly transparent, ensuring only the most scientifically robust projects are awarded funding. Something that Professor Crilly credits

with helping her to develop a network to build research programs, and inevitably to her being in a strong position for success with a NHRMC project grant.

Professor Crilly: With all of the EMF grants, there have been certain components I have been able to work into a nationally competitive grant. Having that foundation and being able to provide that track record means you can achieve something that's of importance not only locally but national and potentially internationally.

Professor Crilly: In Australia, EMF is the only organisation dedicated to funding emergency healthcare research. So far, more than \$17M in research grants has been awarded to emergency healthcare doctors, nurses, paramedics and allied health professionals, to lead high-quality, innovative studies aimed at improving patient outcomes. When asked about the influence of clinician-led research in addressing some of the core issues facing EDs, Julia says clinicians are key problem solvers.

They're at the coalface day in-day out and they know what the clinical problems are. They are the best people to explain the data, explain the nuances involved and why we may have certain findings, so their input is extremely important and when you are able to provide clinicians with research skills in combination with their clinical expertise, that's when you really start seeing vast improvements (I think) in patient care and patient outcomes.

EMF: Professor Crilly enjoys supporting clinicians in that process in her current role, and says when they go on to become clinical leaders in research, that's immensely powerful in being able to lead practice change.

Professor Crilly: I've definitely seen that happen in an exponential way where we've got opportunities for example from EMF where there's funding there to support these clinicians to lead research, and engage with others to have a great team around them so that they can then produce outcomes that are immensely more impactful than doing something yourself.

EMF: Julia says she has seen significant flow-on benefits of a collaborative approach with academics, statisticians and health economists to not only look at what happens to the patient but other aspects around a particular issue that are also important to clinicians and policy and hospital decision makers.

Professor Crilly: When you do that on a multiple layered basis you can see how that can impact multiple sites and from an economic point of view, there's immense power in terms of what can be achieved with that sort of work.

A couple of examples in terms of what we've seen is the EMF funded research led by Professor Gerben Keijzers on how to deal with [spontaneous pneumothorax in non-trauma patients](#) or the work being led by Professor Louse Cullen at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital around [chest pain management](#). These are great examples we've definitely seen examples of clinicians leading researching that have helped solved core issues facing emergency departments.

EMF: Professor Crilly urges nurses and clinicians who are new to research not to let inexperience be a deterrent for applying for grant funding.

Professor Crilly: I guess to start off with if you never apply, then your chances are going to be zero. If you're new to research my first suggestion there is to join a team that has a track record in research in area that you're interested in. That would be number one.

It's good to think big but start small and have a plan of where you want to go but you need take small steps. For example start with a review of literature or an observational study at your site. Do it well first, then you get exposed to the research process, what it looks like and applying for funding.

EMF: For nurses and clinicians who don't necessarily have the research skills, Julia suggests surrounding yourself with people that do who can assist with articulating some of the research language, to improve your chances of accessing research funding.

Professor Crilly: Don't take things personally as well. You will get feedback but that's only designed to improve the design and use that to improve your work.

Research really is a great career. It can improve patient outcomes and clinical practice and inform policy in meaningful ways, not just locally but internationally. There is lot of power in that, and applying for funding through EMF can set you up to achieve that.