

# AAG SECG NEWSLETTER



**AAG**  
Australian  
Association of  
Gerontology

**SECG**  
Student and  
Early Career  
Group



IMAGE BY TRICIA KING

## Welcome to the February/March AAG SECG Newsletter

Hi everyone! I am truly honoured to serve as the SECG President for 2025 and am incredibly excited for the year ahead. This year will be another exiting one filled with exciting opportunities, meaningful collaborations, and impactful initiatives in the field of gerontology.

Working alongside the SECG working group leads and the dedicated individuals within AAG, I am confident that we will achieve great things together. I am especially excited to collaborate with such a passionate and driven team as we strive to foster professional growth, drive positive change, and deliver initiatives that benefit both our members and the broader community.

Stay tuned for updates on the many initiatives and events we have planned – we can't wait to share them with you!

Cheers,  
Kate



### Contents:

President's  
Welcome

SECG and AAG  
Updates

EOI for SECG  
Working Groups

Six Questions with  
Tesfahun Eshetie

### HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE?

Please submit using the form:

[https://uniofsunshinecoast.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_a3Rqs7viisTqoPc](https://uniofsunshinecoast.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a3Rqs7viisTqoPc)

or contact Tricia King [tking2@usc.edu.au](mailto:tking2@usc.edu.au)  
if you have any questions.



# SECG & AAG UPDATES

## REGULAR SECG CATCHUPS

### AAG QLD SECG CATCHUPS [Thursday 6 March - 12.00-1.00] via Zoom

Over lunch, we will introduce you to the new committee, provide the opportunity to network, and invite you to our very first in-person coffee catch-up. Everyone's welcome to attend, whether you are currently working in aged care sector, a student interested in ageing or a researcher.

To find out more and register, use the following link:  
<https://www.aag.asn.au/EventDetail?EventKey=QLD250306>

### AAG VIC SECG MONTHLY WEBINAR [Wednesday 12 March - 12.00 AEDT] via Zoom

AAG Victorian Division SECG are excited to announce the continuation of the AAG VIC SECG monthly webinar series in 2025, building on the success and positive feedback they received. The 30-minute webinars (20-min talk followed by 10-min Q&A) will be held monthly from 12.00-12.30pm AEST/AEDT on the second Wednesday of each month.

They are currently seeking expressions of interest (EOI) from potential speakers to present during the monthly VIC webinar series. They have valued members sharing their research and associated outcomes, and also welcome EOI for others to share their research work or any topics suggested by members. All AAG SECG members were emailed with this EOI information on 4th February. The EOI will close at COB on 5th March.

Register here:  
<https://www.aag.asn.au/EventDetail?EventKey=VIC250312>

## NEW SECG BLOG POST

We've just published a new blog post on the AAG website for you to read. SECG member Dr Debbie Pu has offered advice on ways to promote and measure your research impact beyond citations. You can read Debbie's blog [HERE](#).

Want to contribute to our blog? We welcome contributions to the blog at any stage across the year! If you've got an issue, expertise, or advice please consider writing a blog post for the SECG members.

Submit here:  
[https://uniofsunshinecoast.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_a3Rqs7viisTqoPc](https://uniofsunshinecoast.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a3Rqs7viisTqoPc)

## OTHER EVENTS

### The Power of Infographics in Research 13th March 3pm AEST

The Australian Frailty Network are presenting a session aimed to equip researchers with skill to create compelling infographics with presenter Michael Lawless.

For more information please visit:  
<https://www.afn.org.au/past-events/infographics-in-research/>

Are you a woman with a parent living with dementia? Or have a friend who does? We're growing a sisterhood of community to talk while we walk about our experiences of supporting parents through diagnosis to engaging with services and beyond.

**WALK CLUB 4 DAUGHTERS** is a fabulous new initiative by AAG SECG member Dr Kristina Chelberg.

Join the walk and catchup with other women who have a parent living with dementia on March 1st in Currumbin. For more details contact Kristina via Instagram:  
<https://www.instagram.com/kristinachelberg/>

## UPCOMING AAG EVENTS

### AAG VICTORIA PRESENTS: AGEING WELL IN THE REGIONS [28th March 2025]

The AAG Victorian Committee are hosting an event which showcases experts and the impact of their work on the lives of older people in regional areas.

To find out more and register use the following link:  
<https://www.aag.asn.au/EventDetail?EventKey=VIC250328>

### AAG WA PRESENTS: Successful Ageing presented by Elissa Burton

[Thursday 3rd April 12pm AWST]  
Save the date for a presentation on successful ageing by

To find out more and register use the following link:  
<https://www.aag.asn.au/EventDetail?EventKey=WEB250403>



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# EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

## 2025 Working Groups

AAG's Student and Early Career Group (SECG) makes up a quarter of AAG's total membership. To ensure the ongoing success of this group, SECG members are invited to join one of our three working groups.

### National Conference

Planning student and early career specific events for AAG national conference. This working group is particularly busy for the 6-month period between June to November in the lead up to the conference. This year the conference will be held in Alice Springs from November 11th-14th and members of the working group are highly encouraged to attend the conference.

### Professional Development Events and Webinars

The SECG Professional Development Events and Webinars Working Group provides a range of activities to develop and deliver webinars along with professional development opportunities for SECG members and the wider AAG community. In 2025, the working group will host three webinars on topics relevant to SECG members.

### Communication and Awards

The SECG Communications and Awards Group are responsible for the ongoing communication to members such as blog posts, bi-monthly newsletters, the Helen Barrie Award, and social media posts. The group meets quarterly but works across the year to build and support the community and social profile of the group..

The leader of each working group is a member of the national SECG executive, along with the SECG President.

Joining one of the SECG working groups is a great opportunity to gain experience in the workings of a national membership organisation, develop your skills and grow your network. Before submitting your nomination please review the terms of reference which outline the roles and expectations of group members, [here](#).

If you'd like to discuss this further, please contact me on the details below. Otherwise, submit your expression of interest by completing the [online form](#) with your details and a brief summary (max. 200 words) about yourself, your interests and relevant experience.

If you are part of one of the working groups and would like to continue in your role, please still complete online form, but select 'I am an existing member and would like to continue in 2025.'

Expressions of interest will close at 5.00 pm AEDT on 7 March 2025.

We look forward to welcoming you to the SECG working groups.

Please email [secg@aag.asn.au](mailto:secg@aag.asn.au) if you have any questions.



# SIX QUESTIONS

With Dr Tesfahun Eshetie

## Tell us about yourself.

I am a postdoctoral researcher in the fields of geriatric pharmacoepidemiology, ageing and aged care. I am passionate about improving care quality and health outcomes for the older population. My academic journey has taken me across Africa, the United States, and Australia, and I hold a BPharm, MSc in Clinical Pharmacy, and a PhD in Pharmacy.

I began my career as a clinical pharmacist and a lecturer, which gave me a strong foundation in both clinical practice and education. I then pursued my PhD at the University of South Australia (UniSA), where my research focused on quality use of medicines and medicines safety in people living with dementia. After completing my PhD, I had the opportunity to work as a postdoctoral research scholar in geriatric pharmacotherapy at the University of Washington (USA).

Currently, I am based at the Registry of Senior Australians (ROSA) Research Centre, co-located at the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) and the Caring Futures Institute at Flinders University. My work focuses on measuring and evaluating the quality and safety of care delivered to individuals in the aged care setting.

## What inspired you to pursue a career in gerontology?

My journey into gerontology was driven by my interest in medication safety and quality use of medicines in older people. As a clinical pharmacist, I witnessed firsthand the significant impact that medication-related problems have on the health and well-being of vulnerable populations, including both older and younger people. This inspired me to explore broader issues in quality and safety of care, particularly in complex conditions such as dementia. I have a personal interest in dementia, shaped by my family's experience with this progressive condition.

During my PhD, I gained a deeper understanding of the complex and interconnected challenges in dementia care - not only in medicine prescribing but in ensuring medicines are used safely and appropriately. My postdoctoral research experience in geriatric pharmacotherapy further strengthened my commitment to this field, as I had the opportunity to work with leading pharmacoepidemiologists dedicated to improving medication use in older populations.

I am fortunate to be part of the ROSA Research Centre, where my research focuses on aged care quality and safety. My role here allows me to generate evidence that supports informed decision-making by aged care providers and policy makers, ultimately improving health outcomes for older people.

## What do you find most rewarding about working in the field of aging?

The most rewarding aspect of my work is knowing that the research I contribute to has a direct impact on the quality of life of older people. Care quality and safety is a critical issue in aged care, and I find it very fulfilling to work on addressing evidence gaps in this space. A highlight of my work has been developing risk prediction models to identify the factors that place older people at the greatest risk of poor health outcomes after entering residential aged care. These models can help design individualised, risk-based prevention strategies, ultimately enhancing care quality and safety for residents. Through my leadership in ROSA's Outcome Monitoring System, which is a national quality and safety monitoring and benchmarking system, I contribute to quality and safety monitoring in aged care by providing individualised reports to aged care providers, which helps them evaluate their care delivery and informs their quality improvement activities. Knowing that my research can positively impact people's lives, ensuring safer, high-quality care for older people, is what makes this field so rewarding.

## Outside of work, what else are you wildly passionate about/ enjoy spending your time on/ a fun fact about yourself?

While research certainly keeps me busy, I am also very passionate about my community involvement. For instance, I am the treasurer of a community association in South Australia, where I get to contribute to events that bring people together and support meaningful community led initiatives.

Beyond work, I make sure to spend quality time with my family - my spouse, who is currently completing her PhD in sleep health epidemiology at Flinders University, and our two wonderful children, Abimelech and Zipporah. I also enjoy reading, attending church on Sundays, and catching up with friends.

As for a fun fact, I am a huge coffee lover - especially Ethiopian coffee. Did you know Ethiopia is considered the birthplace of coffee? According to legend, in the 9th century, a young goat herder named Kaldi, from the Kaffa region, noticed his goats becoming unusually energetic after eating coffee cherries. He tried them himself, and this marked the beginning of what has become one of the world's most consumed beverages.

### What is the best piece of advice you've received (professional or otherwise)?

Throughout my academic and research journey, I have been fortunate to have incredible mentors: clinician-researchers, pharmacoepidemiologists, pharmacists, physicians, epidemiologists, statisticians, and, more recently, a consumer mentor. Each has played a vital role in shaping my research career.

One of the most impactful pieces of advice came from my MSc thesis advisor (a clinician-researcher, Prof Girma). After successfully defending my thesis, he encouraged me to pursue research seriously, believing in my potential. But beyond professional success, he also stressed the importance of work-life balance, sharing how his own decision to prioritise family early in his career had been one of the best he had made. His words stayed with me, and now, as I watch my children grow, I appreciate that wisdom more than ever.

Another key moment came during my PhD at UniSA. I discovered an opportunity to apply for the Student Mobility Program, which required securing an international research placement. The challenge? I had no prior connections. I reached out to Prof Gray at the University of Washington via email. Her expertise in medicine use and dementia risk aligned with my research interests. To my surprise, she responded positively, and I won the scholarship. That research placement in Seattle opened the door to a postdoctoral fellowship in geriatric pharmacotherapy research. Taking initiatives, even in uncertain situations, can lead to unexpected and career-defining opportunities.

My PhD supervisors also shaped my career by supporting my PhD research on the quality use of medicines and medication safety in people living with dementia. That focus became the foundation of my research. I realised the broader implications - more than half of people living in permanent residential aged care have dementia - expanding my research into aged care quality and safety.

My current mentor, Prof Maria Inacio, gave me a career-shaping advice on grant writing: start applying early and often. She emphasised that grant writing is a skill - it takes time to develop, and the best way to improve is through practice. Her mentorship and guidance have been instrumental in helping me develop a strong research portfolio and secure competitive funding.

### What are you working on currently?

I am a Research Fellow at the ROSA Research Centre, focusing on aged care and pharmacoepidemiology research. My work leverages a national population-based data platform that integrates aged care, health care, and social welfare data collections. The goal is to generate high quality evidence that improves aged care quality and safety. I am currently working on several projects, including: (1) aged care quality and safety monitoring, where I led activities for an NHMRC-funded project focused on monitoring and improving aged care quality and safety. As part of this, I have been developing risk profiling tools for prioritised quality and safety outcomes. Right now, I am working on a risk prediction model for medication-related hospitalisation after permanent residential aged care entry; (2) impact of informal care on home care quality and safety. I am the inaugural recipient of the Health Translation SA MRFF Catalyst Grant, and this project is actually the first consumer-led initiative by the ROSA Consumer Advisory Committee. We examined national trends and geographical variations in informal care use among home care package recipients over an eight-year period. We are also evaluating the impact of informal care on hospitalisation outcomes and time to permanent residential care entry; (3) I am involved in a project that examines how workforce characteristics and reforms influence aged care quality and safety outcomes. I am also an Associate Investigator on an MRFF-funded project that aims to improve aged care quality through better measurement and evaluation.

## SECG ON SOCIAL MEDIA



The SECG is present across social media and we invite you to engage with the SECG community!



#### FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/143911358969670/>



#### LINKEDIN

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13564197>



#### AAG on X

<https://twitter.com/gerontologyau> – use #AAGSECG for SECG news



#### SECG BLOGS

<https://aag.asn.au/Web/Stay-Informed/SECG-Blogs.aspx>



#### SECG on AAG WEBSITE

<https://aag.asn.au/Web/Web/Connect-Now/Network/student-and-early-career-group-secg-2.aspx>

## Ageing related entertainment

Researching ageing? Balance it with the art of comedy! A Man on the Inside delivers laughs with a side of life experience. We recommend you check it out!

## Have something to share?

If you want to contribute to any of the sections or have or have something to share we'd love to hear from you! The newsletter relies on your content to make it great! So let's make it great!



[https://uniofsunshinecoast.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_a3Rqs7viisTqoPc](https://uniofsunshinecoast.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a3Rqs7viisTqoPc)  
or tking2@usc.edu.au