



The Dementia Research Platform

A guide for researchers

The fast and effective way to access data for dementia research

The Dementia Research Platform is a new, nationally significant research infrastructure being established by the Sax Institute in partnership with Dementia Australia.

The platform brings together 20 years of longitudinal survey data from the 45 and Up Study with more than 12 linked administrative datasets, creating a powerful, policy-ready resource to support high-quality dementia research and advocacy.

The platform provides Dementia Australia Research Foundation–funded researchers with direct access to a uniquely rich, well-characterised dataset for investigating dementia risk, progression, and outcomes at population scale.

Linked datasets	Date Range (Earliest)	Date Range (Latest)*	No. of Participants	No. of Records
45 and Up Study	Jul 2005	Jun 2024	267,357	267,357
Medicare Benefits Scheme including Department of Veteran Affairs MBS	Jan 2001	Jun 2024	267,278	150,555,990
Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme	Jun 2004	Jun 2024	265,944	124,485,594
NSW Admitted Patient Data Collection	Jul 2001	Jun 2023	251,374	3,520,364
NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages	Jan 2006	Dec 2023	65,480	65,602
NSW Cause of Death Unit Record File	Jan 2006	Dec 2022	60,132	60,152
NSW Emergency Department Data Collection	Jan 2005	Jun 2023	223,925	1,454,670
NSW Cancer Registry	Jan 1996	Dec 2021	75,367	94,970
NSW Mental Health Data Collection	Jan 2001	Jun 2023	17,478	16,217,314
Notifiable Conditions Information Management System	Jan 1993	Apr 2024	85,272	102,891
Australian Immunisation Register	Jan 2018	Mar 2024	214,918	2,239,208

*as of May 2026. Updates expected by Dec 2026.

Key benefits



Fast-tracked access

Offers fast-tracked access to data, reducing wait times for researchers by as much as 80%. A researcher that may have previously waited more than a year to access linked data could gain access through the platform in a few months.



Unmatched range of healthcare data

The broad scope of linked data in the platform includes hospital admissions, mental health, ambulatory care, prescription data, notifiable conditions such as COVID, cause of death and much more. Researchers using the platform can seek answers to an unprecedented range of questions about chronic conditions and ageing in Australia.



More than 20 years of longitudinal data

Since 2005, the 45 and Up Study has been following over a quarter of a million Australians. Participants provide in-depth demographic, lifestyle and health information through a baseline questionnaire and are surveyed every five years. Researchers can see changes over time in lifestyle behaviour, biomedical factors and social determinants of health.



Approval process

Researchers can avoid the administrative burden of liaising with multiple data custodians and linkage agencies. The Sax Institute administers the approval process and access fee for all datasets in the platform. Successful research proposals will be approved by Scientific Review as well as the Population Health Services Research Ethics Committee.



Secure virtual workspace

Researchers will access data through The Secure Unified Research Environment (SURE), a highly secure virtual workspace that runs on hardware located at, and managed by, the Sax Institute. Researchers can log in remotely and analyse data, without datasets ever leaving SURE.



Up-to-date data

All datasets available through the platform are updated annually. Researchers will be working with current data immediately and can receive automatic data updates.

FIND OUT MORE

If you're interested in accessing the Dementia Research Platform or discussing your research needs, please contact us at:

45andUp.research@saxinstitute.org.au

About the Sax Institute

The Sax Institute is an independent, not-for-profit organisation and a national leader in driving the use of research evidence in policies and programs to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians.