



SAGHA Study Update 28 July 2026

South Asian Genes and Health in Australia.

Thank you for your continued participation in the SAGHA study and for your patience. We appreciate that some aspects of the project have taken longer than anticipated, and we wanted to provide an update on the progress that has been made.

1. Research Findings Published

In a previous update, we mentioned that our findings from the SAGHA focus group discussions were under review by the European Journal of Human Genetics.

Before research can be published in a scientific journal, it undergoes a rigorous peer-review process. Independent scientists who were not involved in the study carefully assess the work and provide feedback to make sure it is accurate, robust, and of high quality. Reviewers stay anonymous so the assessment is unbiased.

We are delighted to share that after two rounds of review and revisions; our manuscript was accepted for publication. It was especially rewarding to receive feedback highlighting how important and relevant this work is. This is a big milestone for SAGHA, and it would not have been possible without your contribution.

Published: A Milestone for SAGHA

Our focus group findings are now in the European Journal of Human Genetics



Manuscript submitted



Round 1: peer review



Revisions + round 2



Accepted!

Thank you — this milestone would not have been possible without you

2. Developing Australian Recommendations for Heart Disease Risk Assessment in South Asians

As reported in our previous newsletter, information from SAGHA participants has helped us identify several health characteristics that may be more common among South Asians. These include higher rates of hypothyroidism and an earlier age of onset for type 2 diabetes.

These observations are currently based on data from about 200 participants. This gives us valuable early insights, but we need a larger dataset to know whether these patterns hold true for the broader South Asian population in Australia. To strengthen the evidence, we are now examining the Australian National Health Survey and other national datasets.

Ethnicity is not routinely recorded in these datasets, so we will use country of birth to identify South Asian populations. This means we won't capture people of South Asian ancestry born outside South Asia, including those born in Australia. Even so, if we see similar patterns in these larger Australian datasets, it will give much stronger evidence to support changes to heart disease screening and risk assessment guidelines for Australian South Asians.

Building the Evidence for South Asian Heart Guidelines

What we've found so far, and what comes next

What we found so far

~200
participants studied



Higher rates of
hypothyroidism



Earlier onset of
type 2 diabetes

Based on ~200 participants —
a larger dataset is needed to confirm this



What's next

Checking national datasets

Australian National Health Survey
and other national datasets

Using country of birth

to identify South Asian
populations in the data

Stronger evidence

to support new screening guidelines

3. Genetic Testing for Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH)

We know many participants have been eagerly waiting for updates on genetic testing for variants linked to Familial Hypercholesterolaemia (FH).

Unfortunately, there have been significant delays in generating the genetic data, due to circumstances beyond our control. We understand this has been disappointing, and we appreciate your patience. We're pleased to report that analysis is expected to start shortly, and we will keep you informed as we get closer to completion.

FH Genetic Testing: Where We're At

Familial Hypercholesterolaemia analysis update



4. A Message from Vaishnavi

"My time on parental leave with my daughter, Aadhya, has been wonderful, and I can't believe how quickly the time has passed.

I am also writing to let you know that I have now concluded my role at The University of Queensland and have relocated to Sydney with my family. While I am moving on from UQ, my connection with the SAGHA project and team will always remain strong.

I am excited about the future of SAGHA and the opportunities for collaboration with communities and researchers across Australia. It has been a genuine pleasure working with you and getting to know many of you throughout this journey.

If you would like to get in touch, please contact Sonia, who will be happy to pass on your message."

5. New Members of the SAGHA Team

We have two new members of the SAGHA team.

Amy Clark

"I am a Kamilori descendant and am privileged to live and work on Gubbi Gubbi land. After completing my Master of Genetic Counselling in 2023, I joined Integrating Genomics into Medicine (IGM) team at UQ and have also worked as a clinical genetic counsellor with Genetic Health Queensland.

I am involved in several research projects, including SAGHA, and look forward to supporting the team and community. In my past life, I was a secondary school teacher.”

Farah Naz Hashmani

“I recently joined the Human Studies Unit (HSU) as a Research Project Coordinator. I’m originally from Pakistan—a country known for its rich culture, warm hospitality, and breathtaking mountains. I have over 15 years of experience in public health research, health services management, and coordinating multidisciplinary research projects.

After completing my postgraduate degree at University College London, I worked on a variety of research projects focused on improving healthcare and making a positive difference for patients and communities. I enjoy working with researchers, clinicians, and consumers to support collaborative research that leads to better health outcomes.”

Looking Ahead

There is still much exciting work underway, and we look forward to sharing further updates as the project progresses.

Thank you once again for your valuable participation and ongoing support. Your contribution is helping to improve our understanding of health and disease risk in South Asian communities in Australia, and will help inform future research and healthcare recommendations.

Warm regards,

Sonia and The SAGHA Research Team