



Clown Doctors in Specialist Outpatient Clinics

Evaluative Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis
August 2022

Acknowledgement

SVA would like to acknowledge the participation of Humour Foundation's employees who took time to provide thoughtful and thorough input, contributing to the strong evidence base that is critical to this analysis.

Professional Disclosure statement

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SVA Consulting is Australia's leading not-for-profit consultancy. We focus solely on social impact and work with partners to increase their capacity to create positive change. Thanks to more than 10 years of working with not-for-profits, government and funders, we have developed a deep understanding of the sector and 'what works'.

Our team is passionate about what they do and use their diverse experience to work together to solve Australia's most pressing challenges.

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About this report



The Humour Foundation commissioned Social Ventures Australia (SVA) Consulting to understand the social return on investment generated through the Clown Doctors program in six specialist outpatient clinics around Australia.

The SROI methodology was used to complete this analysis. The analysis was undertaken to assist The Humour Foundation to better understand and articulate the value created by the Clown Doctors program when it is delivered in specialist outpatient clinics in children's hospitals.

SROI is an internationally recognised methodology used to understand, measure and value the impact of a program or organisation. It is a form of cost-benefit analysis that examines the social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes created and the costs of creating them. The principles of this approach are set out below under **'Method'**. This report builds on the 2015 report also commissioned by The Humour Foundation and prepared by SVA. That report focused on all of the Clown Doctors work – across clinics as well as in wards.

This SROI analysis looked at the investment in and the outcomes created by the Clown Doctors program for one year (Calendar Year 2019), in six specialist outpatient clinics that operate in children's hospitals across Australia. In this project, SVA Consulting engaged with families of children who attended a clinic, hospital staff, Clown Doctors, other key staff members of The Humour Foundation, as well as doctors who are experts in their respective areas of clinical medicine. SVA also analysed the data collected by The Humour Foundation related to the activities of Clown Doctors and conducted a literature review to understand the benefits of humour and clown therapy.

Summary of findings

The application of the SROI methodology illustrated the social and economic benefits that were created by The Humour Foundation through the Clown Doctors program in the six specialist clinics.

Social Return on Investment (SROI)

In Calendar Year 2019, The Humour Foundation invested \$180,481 into delivering the Clown Doctors program in six specialist clinics, delivering an estimated \$1.8m in social and economic benefits. This equates to an SROI ratio of 9.9:1.



Insights

This report identifies four insights about the factors contributing to the outcomes achieved by The Humour Foundation in the six specialist clinics in scope:

- 1** **The Clown Doctors' work in specialist clinics is unique.** Other options to distract children during scary and painful medical procedures are available, such as iPads and VR headsets, but clinicians see the Clown Doctors as having a unique ability to tailor their interactions to each child, to transform their experience of coming to hospital for treatment.
- 2** **Clown Doctors' are experts in using play, presence and humour to harness the healing power of joy and connection.** They are experts in adapting to the situation they find when they walk into a clinic, and working with a broad range of ages, personalities and families.
- 3** **The Clown Doctors program creates significant value for clinics.** By working closely with clinical staff, Clown Doctors help improve the efficiency of procedures, support doctors' and nurses' mental health and wellbeing, and lead to financial savings for hospitals.
- 4** **There are significant longer-term outcomes for children and families.** In some clinics, particularly where repeat visits or painful treatments are required, children and their families may experience lasting trauma, or stressful experience can prolong healing time. The positive experiences that Clown Doctors create in these clinics can therefore provide critical longer term benefits for children and their families.

Impact snapshot

The Social Return on Investment analysis of the Clown Doctors program in these six clinics highlighted a range of benefits for different stakeholders. A selection of key impact metrics is presented below. All figures are annual based on what the Clown Doctors program delivered in Calendar Year 2019 (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic). A complete view of the valuation of all outcomes can be found under **Stakeholder outcomes**.

Impacts for children

\$673k

Total value created for children



2,666

Number of individual children that Clown Doctors interacted with



\$68

Average cost to deliver the Clown Doctors program in clinics per child



Impacts for families

\$131k

Total value created for families



2,615

Number of family members that Clown Doctors interacted with



Impacts for clinics and staff

\$893k

Total value created for clinics and staff



6,299

Number of interactions that Clown doctors had with clinical staff



\$533k

Total financial savings from avoided use of sedation during procedures



Background

The organisation

The Humour Foundation is an Australian charity dedicated to promoting and delivering the health benefits of humour. It aims to spread 'doses' of fun and laughter to people in need across Australia, improving the quality of life for people in hospitals, health and aged care facilities.

The organisation is committed to research and evaluation to create real value and impact in the lives of their beneficiaries. A 2015 study conducted by Social Ventures Australia found that for every \$1 invested into the whole Clown Doctors program, a \$4.20 social return to the community would be created.

Where evidence is limited, The Humour Foundation is at the forefront of driving new understanding of the healing power of humour. The Laughter Care program was the subject of a world first NH&MRC funded research project that indicated that the clown performers reduced agitation symptoms for residents with dementia by the same level as antipsychotic behaviour management medication. The Humour Foundation has also funded a recently completed PhD investigating the impact of the Clown Doctors program in hospitals.



1997

The year that Clown Doctors started their rounds in hospitals. They operated in 19 hospitals across Australia in 2019



70

The number of professional performers that The Humour Foundation employs across their programs



1,826

The number of Clown Doctor rounds completed in hospitals in 2019

The cause

There is an extensive body of research into the therapeutic benefits of humour therapy and the value of Clown Doctor care in a clinical environment.

Challenging operating environment for medical professionals

Medical professionals in clinics face a range of challenges in their day-to-day work. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals and clinics experienced staffing shortages, with a high degree of stress and workload being reported.

The experience of the pandemic has been extremely challenging for clinical staff from a capacity perspective. Restrictions imposed in hospitals meant that Clown Doctors could not come in, and therefore existing staff had to play this role with children. This has further emphasised the important role that Clown Doctors play in clinics to support the already overburdened clinical staff in conducting procedures efficiently and effectively.

Impact of hospitals on children and their family

Hospitals can be very traumatic environments, particularly for children. Children can feel sad, anxious, tense, frightened, lonely and in pain. They also have to adjust to unfamiliar routines, medical instruments and hospital procedures. When a child is in hospital, they are away from the comfort of their own home and all that is familiar. Additionally, being in hospitals, particularly when subject to negative experiences in these environments, can have longer term impacts. This can include psychological impacts (e.g. the potential for longer term distress and trauma), as well as physical impacts through longer time required for healing.

The program

Clown Doctors, a program run by The Humour Foundation, helps to alleviate some of these negative experiences in hospitals and bring joy to children's lives. The program addresses the psychosocial needs of the child in hospital in a unique way – by making them laugh in an environment that is normally associated with sadness and fear. Children can forget their illness for a moment and return to a world of fantasy and play.

The program operated in 19 children's hospitals across Australia in 2019, touching the lives of over thousands of children, their families and staff every year. 'Clown Rounds' are conducted through all wards including intensive care and oncology, and most clinics including emergency and burns.

Clown Doctors are specially trained professional artists who combine interpersonal and communication skills with improvisational performances (e.g. mime, music, movement, dance, poetry, juggling, magic and storytelling) to facilitate play in a nurturing and supportive environment. The work they do in hospitals complements the role of the clinical staff, and focuses on bringing a sense of joy and comfort to what otherwise could be a stressful experience, not just for children but also for their families.

The focus of this report was on the work of Clown Doctors in selected out-patient clinics. These are specialised facilities within hospitals that are responsible for the undertaking of procedures in areas including burns, oncology and pathology. Six individual clinics were analysed as part of this study, and details of these can be found below in **Table 1**.

#	Clinic and Hospital City	Description of work performed in clinic	Number of interactions with children (2019)
1	Burns at Royal Children's Melbourne	Assisting with general burns management, including burns assessment and re-dressing	650
2	Pathology at Royal Children's Melbourne	Collecting and analysing specimens from patients	1,400
3	VFPMS ¹ at Royal Children's Melbourne	Performing forensic medical assessments and care for abused, assaulted and neglected children	49
4	Burns at Queensland Children's Brisbane	Assisting with general burns management, including burns assessment and re-dressing	2,000
5	K-Wires at Women's and Children's Adelaide	Performing removal of 'K-wire' pins which are required for bone healing	150
6	Burns at Royal Hobart Hobart	Assessment and management of patients with cancer involving the use of radiation therapy	350
Total interactions			4,599

Table 1: List of clinics analysed

¹ Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service

Project approach

Scope

This study focused on analysing the investment in the Clown Doctors program over the course of one calendar year in 2019, and the outcomes that were the result of this investment. This year was chosen because the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the delivery of the Clown Doctors program in children's hospitals and clinics, as lockdown rules and physical distancing restrictions limited access.

The scope of this SROI study was strictly limited to six specialist outpatient clinics within children's hospitals across Australia: the burns, pathology and Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service (VFPMS) clinics at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, the burns clinic at the Queensland Children's Hospital in Brisbane, the K-Wires orthopaedic clinic at the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide, and the burns clinic at the Royal Hobart Hospital.



Method

Social Return On Investment (SROI) is an internationally recognised approach that provides a framework to understand, measure and value the impact of a program or organisation. It is a form of cost-benefit analysis that examines the social, economic and environmental outcomes created by the activities of the program and the costs of creating them.

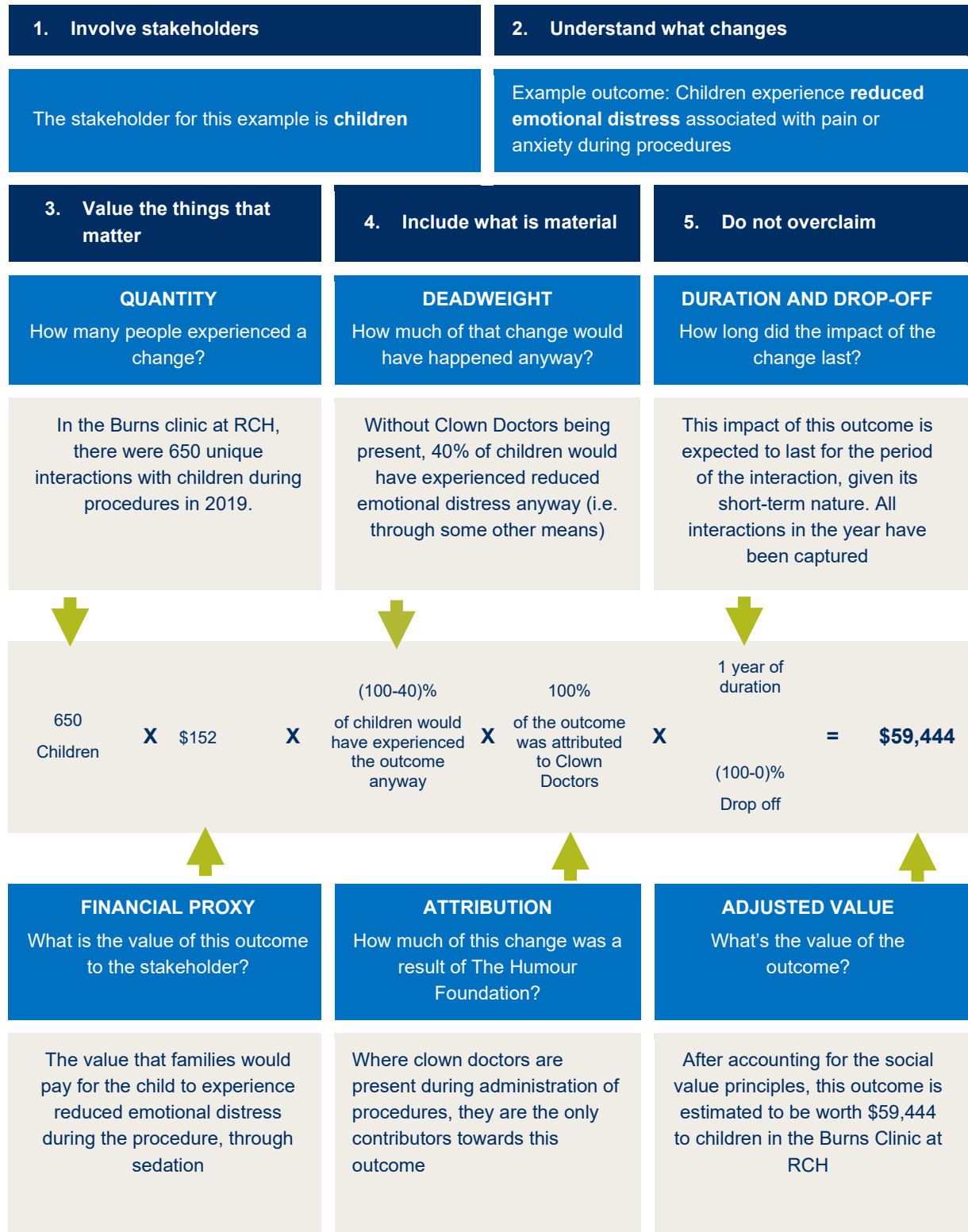
Social value is the value that people place on the changes that they experience in their lives. The Principles of Social Value provide the basic building blocks for anyone who wants to make decisions that take this wider definition of value into account.

1	 Involve stakeholders	Stakeholders should inform what gets measured and how this is measured and valued.
2	 Understand what changes	Articulate how change is created and evaluate this through evidence gathered, recognising positive and negative changes as well as those that are intended and unintended.
3	 Value things that matter	Use financial proxies so the value of the outcomes can be recognised.
4	 Only include what is material	Determine what information and evidence must be included in the accounts to give a true and fair picture, such that stakeholders can draw reasonable conclusions about impact.
5	 Do not overclaim	Organisations should only claim the value that they are responsible for creating.
6	 Be transparent	Demonstrate the basis on which the analysis may be considered accurate and honest and show that it will be reported to and discussed with stakeholders.
7	 Verify the results	Ensure appropriate independent verification of the analysis.
8	 Be responsive	Pursue optimum Social Value based on decision making that is timely and supported by appropriate accounting and reporting.

The outcome of the SROI analysis is a story about the value of change created, relative to the investment.

Applying the Social Value principles: worked example

This is a worked example of how the first five Social Value principles were applied to one outcome identified through the SROI analysis.:



Data collection

Data collection in this study consisted of three components:

1. Surveys of the clinical staff across the six clinics, and of families attending the clinics
2. Targeted interviews with identified key stakeholders
3. Desktop research and analysis of documents shared by The Humour Foundation

Targeted interviews

Interviews were conducted with The Humour Foundation staff (including Clown Doctors and the Artistic Director), and with clinical staff (one staff member in each clinic). These interviews were important in identifying and validating the outcomes that were selected to be valued in the impact map. Several key assumptions in the analysis were also based on interview insights, where this was not possible to obtain from the surveys (see below).

Hospital staff survey and family survey

These surveys were used to further test and validate the findings from interviews with key stakeholders. The aim was to both capture the opinion of the staff and parents on the program, and these surveys were used to determine some specific inputs for the SROI analysis, particularly for clinics (e.g. estimates of time saved using Clown Doctors in clinics).

Desktop research

Additionally, desktop research was conducted, particularly to inform financial proxies, and other assumptions including deadweight and attribution. This research also included an analysis of documents provided by The Humour Foundation, including a PhD study into the benefits of Clown Doctors and laughter therapy, speech transcripts and other relevant materials.

Limitations

Limitation 1: Restrictions on collecting data and analysing all outpatient clinics

The Humour Foundation places Clown Doctors in clinics across Australia, across all States and Territories. As noted above the scope of this study was restricted to six specialist outpatient clinics.

Limitation 2: Restrictions on primary data collection

For both the surveys and interviews conducted, the small sample size was a limitation, particularly for the surveys. There were 11 valid responses were received from families, whilst the staff survey resulted in 28 responses. Additionally, there was a heavy reliance on self-reported data throughout this stakeholder consultation process, which comes with a degree of inherent bias that was unavoidable for this study.

Limitation 3: Limited ability to collect data on stated preferences to inform financial proxies

The majority of financial proxies used the 'revealed preference' technique, which looks at the market price of a similar service, program or activity that the stakeholder could have done to achieve a similar change. Ideally, it would have been preferable to use the 'stated preferences' technique too, where stakeholders state what they are prepared to pay for outcomes.

Investment

The investment included in an SROI analysis is a valuation of all of the inputs required to achieve the outcomes that will be described, measured and valued. Both monetary (cash) and non-monetary (in-kind) contributions are considered. For The Humour Foundation, only cash contributions were applicable in 2019.

As mentioned above under **‘Limitations’**, The Humour Foundation places Clown Doctors in clinics across Australia, across all states and territories, and for the purposes of this study, in order to minimise the data collection burden on clinics, a subset of these clinics was analysed, and used as a representative sample.

The total direct program costs into the six clinics was \$68,097. This investment represents 4% of the overall Clown Doctor program costs across *all* clinics and hospitals.

In order to estimate the other costs that are necessary to run the Clown Doctors program (e.g., The Humour Foundation program costs, overheads and fundraising costs), it was estimated therefore that 4% of those costs should be allocated to the six clinics. This is estimated at \$112,384 in other costs (Figure 1). The total investment in the six Clown Doctors clinics during 2019 was therefore estimated to be \$180,481.

Total investment

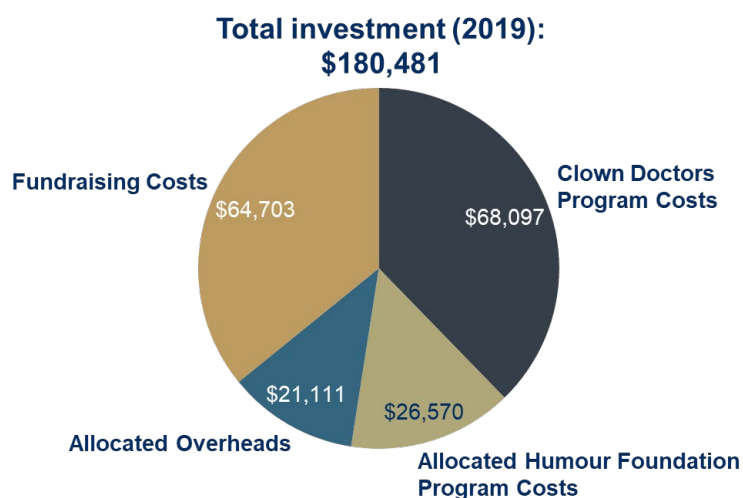


Figure 1: Total investment in the Clown Doctors program in six selected clinics in 2019

Stakeholder outcomes

The SROI analysis determined that The Humour Foundation creates value for a range of stakeholders:



Children

Thousands of children interact with Clown Doctors at the six clinics every year. In 2019, Clown Doctors had an estimated 4,600 interactions with children at these clinics (Table 1). Children benefit directly through their interactions with Clown Doctors. Depending on the particular procedure that children undertake in clinics, children may experience a mix of psychological benefits (reduced emotional distress before and during procedures), as well as longer term physical benefits (reduced healing time) as well as psychological benefits (reduced likelihood of psychosocial impacts)



Families

Families attending procedures with their children also benefit from the presence of Clown Doctors, as the Clown Doctors also interact with the families directly before and during procedures. The key benefits include reduced distress as their child is better able to tolerate the procedure, as well as reduced anxiety for families if they are coming in for repeat procedures.



Clinics and staff

Clinics and the doctors and nurses who work there enjoy a range of benefits from the Clown Doctor program. In the shorter term, clinics save costly resources (e.g. sedatives) and the associated staff time to administer these resources, through children being more distracted during procedures. Additionally, across all procedures, Clown Doctors enable the procedure to be conducted in a more time efficient manner, saving existing staff time, and reducing the need to use additional staff in place of the Clown Doctor. Individual staff also benefit greatly, as they are less stressed due to the presence of Clown Doctors.

Children

\$428k

Outcome 1: Children experience reduced emotional distress associated with pain or anxiety during procedures

Clown Doctors reduce children's emotional distress using play, connection and humour to provide positive distraction and help them feel relaxed during procedures

Visiting the specialist clinics for treatment can be a frightening, upsetting and painful experience for children. The length time that children spend at each clinic, and the type of procedures involved, vary widely across the six clinics included in the study. For example, in the Pathology clinic, children will only visit for a short time to their blood taken, while in Burns clinics, procedures may involve dressing changes taking longer periods of time. In all cases, the Clown Doctors stay with children throughout the procedure, and use their skills to reduce their emotional distress and experience of pain.

This outcome is experienced by a proportion of children visiting all six clinics, and every time they visit too: in the two burns clinics, oncology clinic and pathology clinic included in the study, children may visit multiple times, and each time they benefit from the reduced emotional distress.

Parents place a high value on anything that will help their children avoid physical pain or anxiety. Without Clown Doctors, the most common alternative is using sedation, typically nitrous oxide (approx. 95% of cases), but in some cases general anaesthetic (approx. 5% of cases).

"Distraction therapy doesn't just make the kids distracted and allow people to do stuff like dressings, it actually has been shown to reduce pain scores, anxiety scores." Doctor

\$153k

Outcome 2: Children are less likely to have negative psychosocial impacts

Clown Doctors reduce the likelihood of children experiencing negative psychosocial impacts after their medical procedures

Some children experience lasting trauma from negative experience in medical clinics, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). While this occurs in a minority of cases for these children it can have a lasting effect on their mental health and wellbeing, social activities, engagement in school, as well as their perceptions and preferences around future medical treatment.

Children may experience clinics and hospitals as foreign, disempowering environments, where they are having things 'done' to them against their will by strangers. Clown Doctors use play and connection to make it a less distressing experience, and to give children a sense of agency and power which can help to reframe the experience and memory of going to the clinics. This outcome is assumed to be relevant for only 10% of children across all clinics (the average that would be expected to experience some lasting psychosocial impacts), and the benefit of this outcome is assumed to last for three years for these children.

A common intervention for those children who do experience negative psychosocial impacts is having a series of talking therapy sessions with a child psychologist to help them make sense of the experience and resolve any trauma. Clown Doctors provide a preventative approach to reducing the likelihood of this trauma occurring in the first place.

\$186k

Outcome 3: Children experience reduced physical healing time

Clown Doctors harness the healing power of laughter and joy to reduce the time it takes for children to heal post-treatment

Scientific evidence is growing rapidly about the ability of laughter therapy and other distraction methods, to support the human body's ability to heal from physical injury and surgery.² Experiences of stress increase the presence of hormones that can hamper the body's ability to heal. Research suggests that distraction therapy including laughter can reduce healing time from burns treatments by 2-4 days on average.

Clinical staff working at burns clinics at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne and Queensland Children's Hospital in Brisbane have seen firsthand the impact that Clown Doctors have had on children's healing time post-treatment. This outcome is not relevant in the other four clinics included in this study.

The sooner that children's burns heal, the sooner they can move without pain and discomfort, return to school, see their friends, and get back to normal.

"In the burns world 17 days is the magic number: if a burn heals within 17 days, it will do so without scarring, so you can discharge the kids, they don't need a skin graft, they don't need scar management or reconstructive surgery. Everything we do is to try and get the healing under 17 days. By using these distraction methods, we're getting on average 2-4 days faster healing, which can bring a lot of kids who would end up taking longer than 17 days on to the other side of it, which is enormous for the kids, plus also really cost effective from a health economics perspective." Doctor

Families

\$120k

Outcome 4: Families experience less distress where a child is able to tolerate pain, discomfort or anxiety

Clown Doctors also help parents, carers and siblings experience less emotional distress when a child is more able to tolerate pain, discomfort or anxiety

Clown Doctors do this by playing with the child but also by interacting with their families with kindness, humour and presence. This helps adults feel at ease and relaxed in clinical environments with doctors and nurses focused on medical procedures. And when parents and carers are relaxed and calm, children also feel more relaxed. This outcome is experienced by a proportion of the families of children visiting all six clinics, and every time they visit too: in the two burns clinics, oncology clinic and pathology clinic included in the study, children may visit multiple times, and each time their families benefit from the reduced emotional distress.

"With the parents being there, they see that their children are having a better experience, so the parents are less anxious, which then goes into the loop where the parents' response will be mirrored by the kids – so it's just breaking that cycle where everyone is anxious." Doctor

² Miller, K, et. al, 'A novel technology approach to pain management in children with burns: A prospective randomized controlled trial', *Burns* Volume 37, Issue 3, May 2011, Pages 395-405.

Outcome 5: Families experience reduced anxiety & stress during ongoing or repeated treatment

\$11k

Clown Doctors also reduce the likelihood that family members will have lasting psychosocial impacts associated with seeing their children experience suffering

Families who are taking their children to repeated visits and procedures at the burns, oncology and pathology clinics are at greatest risk of experiencing trauma. These families benefit from the Clown Doctors' skills in bringing play, connection and humour into the clinical environment to reframe the experience and help parents, carers and siblings also feel empowered. This outcome is assumed to be experienced only by families who come to clinics with repeat visits. Similar to Outcome 2 (above), the value of this outcome for families can be understood as providing a preventative intervention that reduces the likelihood of undergoing a series of talking therapy sessions with a psychologist.

Clinics

\$533k

Outcome 6: Clinics avoid using costly medical resources through children being distracted and cooperative during procedures

By distracting children and helping them feel calmer during procedures, clinical staff are able to use fewer medical resources

This helps clinics achieve a financial saving by avoiding the use of costly anaesthetics – nitrous oxide (laughing gas) in 95% of cases, and general anaesthetic in 5% of cases – plus the staff time required to administer anaesthetics. The avoided use of anaesthetics represents a financial saving to clinics' operating costs, as doctors and nurses can use this freed up time for other tasks and seeing other patients. This outcome is not relevant for all clinics: in the VFPMS clinic at the Royal Children's Hospital sedation is never used, while in burns clinics it is estimated that Clown Doctors help avoid the use of anaesthetics in approximately 50% of procedures.

"The Clown Doctors are really useful in getting children to do things so that clinical staff can make an assessment of any developmental delays. They also enable parents and doctors to have a conversation about the child"

VFPMS Doctor

Outcome 7: Clinic staff save time in preparing and administering procedures

\$132k

In addition, Clown Doctors help clinics reduce staffing costs associated with administering procedures

When children are distracted and calmer, doctors and nurses can focus on administering medical procedures effectively and more efficiently. This reduces the length of time taken to administer procedures in five of the clinics included in the study (not relevant to the VFPMS clinic at the Royal Children's Hospital): a survey of clinical staff found that the average time saving per procedure in

each clinic ranges from 13 to 26 minutes, depending on the clinic. This saving represents a reallocation of staff time because doctors and nurses can use this freed up time for other tasks and seeing other patients.

“There’s absolutely no doubt about it – the smooth running of things is better with them there, and the nursing staff can do what they need to do with the kids, getting their dressings off, wounds cleaned and dressing back on again. It’s a better experience over all.” Doctor

\$29k

Outcome 8: Clinic staff are happier and less stressed

Clown Doctors help doctors and nurses have a more positive experience

Medicine can be a stressful profession, especially when it involves administering procedures that can be distressing and painful for children. Clown Doctors benefit doctors and nurses’ own mental health by improving the experiences of children and their families, as well as bringing their playfulness, connection and humour into the workplace. This outcome was found to be relevant to all six clinics, but particularly in the two burns clinics, and the VFPMS clinic at the Royal Children’s Hospital. Without Clown Doctors, clinical staff could rely on other alternatives to support their mental health and wellbeing at work. The value of this outcome can be estimated by comparing it to doctors and nurses taking time out to rest or meditate after a stressful procedure.

“Staff are already under a fair bit of stress. Clown Doctors help decrease stress in the workforce and improving team functioning, so that people are keen to keep going. Staff are leaving work happier.” VFPMS Doctor

\$199k

Outcome 9: Clinic staff avoid using costly resources in the longer term

Clown Doctors also deliver a financial saving to burns clinics by reducing the healing time required for many children receiving treatments there.

Reducing the healing time for children visiting burns clinics also reduces the number of additional visits they need to make to clinics to have their dressings changed. The study estimated that in clinics where this outcome is relevant, there was a two- to four-day reduction in healing time (equivalent to one avoided return visit to the clinic). This represents a staffing reallocation cost as clinical staff can use their time more efficiently to see other patients.

“The average cost of treating a small burn is about \$10,000... Anything which can speed up wound healing or reduce skin grafting or reduce the number of dressings, it’s always going to be cost effective.” Doctor

Calculating the SROI ratio

Investment

The Humour Foundation’s total investment in delivering the Clown Doctors program in the six clinics in the Calendar Year 2019 is estimated at **\$180,481**. Figure 1 above shows how this investment can be broken down into four areas Clown Doctor program costs (e.g. fees for Clown Doctors), The Humour Foundation program costs (e.g. program staff wages), overheads (e.g. rent), and fundraising costs (e.g. donor acquisitions).

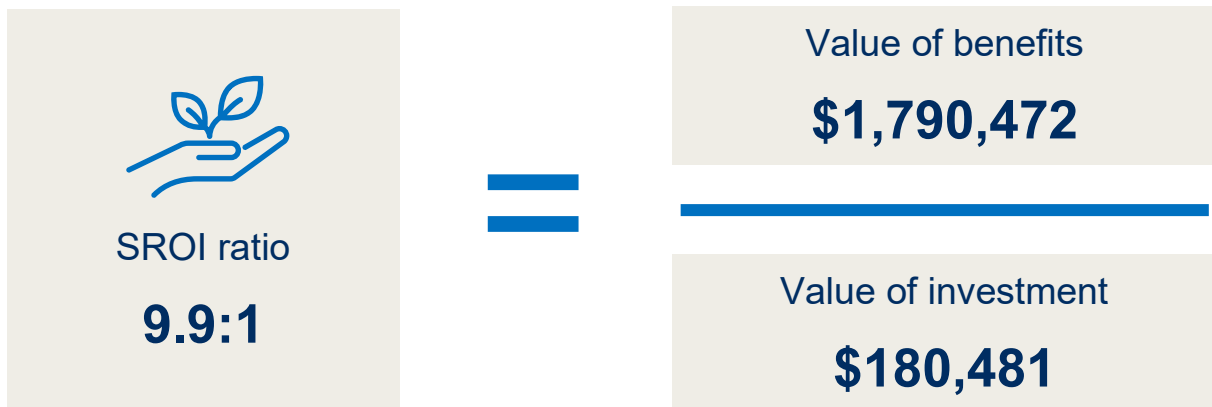
Outcomes

The total value of outcomes generated for the three stakeholder groups in this period is calculated at **\$1.8m**. The table below presents the total estimated value generated for each outcome and each stakeholder.

Stakeholders	Outcomes	Value per outcome	Value per stakeholder	% of total value
Children	1.1 Children experience reduced emotional distress associated with pain or anxiety during procedures	\$428,165	\$766,194	43%
	1.2 Children are less likely to have negative psychosocial impacts (e.g. PTSD from a bad clinical experience)	\$152,529		
	1.3 Children experience reduced physical healing time	\$185,500		
Parents	2.1 Families experience less distress where a child is able to tolerate pain, discomfort or anxiety	\$120,382	\$131,079	7%
	2.2 Families experience reduced anxiety and stress during ongoing or repeated treatment	\$10,697		
Clinics	3.1 Clinics save time and costly resources through children being distracted during procedures and being more cooperative	\$533,187	\$893,199	50%
	3.2 Clinic staff save time in preparing and administering procedures	\$132,180		
	3.3 Clinic staff are happier and less stressed	\$29,081		
	3.4 Clinic staff avoid using costly resources in the longer term (e.g. through a reduction in the level of treatment)	\$198,750		
		\$1,790,427	\$1,790,427	100%
		Investment	\$180,481	
		Ratio	9.9:1	

SROI ratio

Based on the investment and operations of Clown Doctors in Calendar Year 2019 in the six selected clinics, The Humour Foundation generated a social return on investment of **9.9:1**



That is, for every **\$1** invested in The Humour Foundation's Clown Doctors Program in these clinics, **\$9.90** of social and economic value is created.

Insights

The Clown Doctors program creates significant value in these six clinics. The SROI analysis helps to understand how the Clown Doctors generate these outcomes, and why their work is so important and valuable.

1 The Clown Doctors' work in specialist clinics is unique

Other options to distract children during scary and painful medical procedures are available, such as iPads and VR headsets. However clinicians see the Clown Doctors as having a unique ability to tailor their interactions to each child, to transform their experience of coming to hospital for treatment. In addition, Clown Doctors have the ability to work with doctors and nurses to distract children without getting in the way of medical procedures. Consultations found that the Clown Doctors are called upon to support in specialist clinics where other services are not, because they have the expertise to help children in more intense settings, and because they have established trust with clinicians and hospitals.

2 Clown Doctors' are experts in using play, presence and humour to harness the healing power of joy and connection

They are experts in adapting to whatever situation they encounter when they step into a clinic, and working with a broad range of ages, personalities and families. Clown Doctors are experienced professionals with significant experience in theatre, improv comedy, performing arts, and a broad range of attributes and skills that includes emotional sensitivity, presence, flexibility and adaptability, being able to 'read the room', and playfulness. These characteristics are what enables the Clown Doctors to work in a diversity of clinical settings and have an impact on the many different people they meet, including children, their parents and families, and clinical staff who are working hard to complete medical procedures effectively.

3 The Clown Doctors program creates significant value for clinics

Although Clown Doctors keep their attention focused on the children who are visiting clinics for procedures, they also create significant social and economic value for clinics. The SROI analysis suggests that 50% of the total value created by the program in the six clinics is experienced by clinics and the staff who work there. The Clown Doctors have been working with some clinics for decades now. They have an intimate understanding of what happens in the clinics and how to distract children without getting in the way of procedures. By working closely with clinical staff, the Clown Doctors help everything run more smoothly in clinics and improve the efficiency of procedures, help support the mental health and wellbeing of doctors and nurses, and reduce spending on anaesthetics that might otherwise be used to help children feel less pain or anxiety.

4 There are significant long-term outcomes for children and families

Traumatic and stressful experiences in hospital can lead to lasting trauma or prolong healing time from burns. The positive experiences that Clown Doctors create in these clinics can generate valuable long-term benefits for children and their families by reducing the likelihood of negative impacts. The Clown Doctors program is therefore particularly valuable in clinics where children need to make repeat visits for procedures, or where procedures are painful, scary or prolonged and may have a higher likelihood of causing lasting trauma. And in these cases, Clown Doctors' unique characteristics become even more important – in building relationships with children and their families over multiple visits, or staying present and 'in character' with a child over the course of a long procedure.



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